MLJ Reviews
Edited by JUDITH E. LISKIN-GASPARRO
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MLJ Review Policy
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THEORY AND PRACTICE


Its title notwithstanding, this volume is intended for teachers of English as a second language (ESL or, as the author prefers, ENL, English as a new language), many of whom have training in related fields but are unfamiliar with the teaching and learning of English. The author provides such individuals with a basic introduction to “how and why the English language works” (p. xi), usable in both formal and informal educational settings. The author’s commitment to present his material in nontechnical terms is evidenced in his six chapter titles: “Some Basic Features of Language and Communication,” “Words and Dictionaries,” “English Use and Usage,” “Social Conventions and English Use,” “American English Variations,” and “Meaning and Signification.” As those titles may indicate, Linguaistics for L2 Teachers (LLT) seeks to increase teachers’ knowledge and understanding, rather than to propose instructional approaches.

Scattered through the preface, introduction, and introductory section of chapter 1 are further indications of the author’s aims and perspectives; for example, “the view in this book sees language as a human activity in which the users make decisions about language options that are available to them” (p. xvii), and “the ideas in this text are presented from a sociolinguistic perspective” (p. 3). Later in the volume, Andrews makes clear that he rejects prescriptive notions of good or standard English in favor of a context- and purpose-based definition. His criterion for judging the goodness of use is the familiar “Who is saying what to whom for what purpose under which circumstances?” (p. 54).

Each chapter begins with a prereading activity (usually a question designed to encourage discussion) and ends with postreading exercises in which readers respond to statements—often indicating whether they can be deduced from the text—or questions. Chapters also include interactive tasks, such as checking dictionary etymologies, analyzing conversations, and experimenting with violations of sociolinguistic conventions. Endnotes and references reflect Andrews’s effort to support his contentions with findings from research studies while grounding his comments in the reality with which he assumes his readers are familiar; thus, the columnist Dave Barry (in his guise as Mr. Language Person) and the United Methodist Hymnal rub shoulders with Labov, Wittgenstein, and Grice.

In many ways, this volume succeeds more as an informal introduction to language from a linguist’s viewpoint than as a handbook intended for inexperienced teachers of ENL. Andrews
touched on theories of the origins of language, animal communication, word formation processes, discourse routines, variation, dialects, and attitudes, among other topics. English is, of course, the language of illustration, and problems specific to English and to U.S. culture are addressed. But the author devotes much space to supplying alternatives to the assumed beliefs of his readers (e.g., that there is one correct form of a language, that some regional pronunciations are better than others, that language today is less precise than it was in the past). Clearly, elucidating the features and behaviors of languages may help to ensure that ENL teachers will perform more effectively, and LLT can serve this purpose. Nonetheless, a guidance counselor or foreign language teacher faced with a class of limited English proficiency high school students might expect more focus on English than is available in LLT.

A provocative contradiction may be partly responsible for this shortcoming. Andrews subscribes to a view of language as multifaceted and ever-changing. He presents differences in use ascribable to context, register, speaker relationships, and message medium. Yet his deliberate constructions of himself (and the concomitant, if unintended, constructions of his reader) in the text tend to narrow the picture of English that emerges, rather than to broaden it. A phrase such as “the culture that you and I know” (p. 103) may be problematic for some, given that Andrews mentions his (Christian) church or religion no fewer than 20 times in 135 pages, and he makes specific and frequent reference to a certain segment of U.S. society through some of its most obvious signifiers (golf, pot roast dinners on Sunday, a cleaning lady, etc.). A striking example occurs on pages 107–108: “You may have access to a veritable treasure trove of examples of chronological change in either The Bible or the hymnal used in your church or home.” One senses that the chatty, folksy tone and the familiarity of details Andrews shares (he fishes with a friend named Norman, his wife is African-American, his secretary is a dutiful person, he enjoys football) are intended (a) to present linguistic knowledge to future ENL instructors in a nonthreatening fashion, and (b) to provide concrete illustration of concepts. However, this reader found the frequent allusions both off-putting and distracting. It should be noted in passing that several dozen typographical errors mar a book that is otherwise visually clear and effective.

Andrews is to be commended for introducing inexperienced ENL teachers to sociolinguistics and to a view of English that emphasizes meaning in interaction. LLT solves what is defined implicitly as the most significant problem facing these teachers: their presumed belief that ENL students must be taught one standard version of the language. Thus, I would recommend it only in conjunction with other volumes whose view is more comprehensive and only to teachers whose cultural proficiency allows them to approach Andrews’s illustrations critically.

REBECCA R. KLINE
Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages


The Communicative Classroom is the third volume in the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese (AATSP) Professional Development Handbook Series for K–16 teachers. The volume contains five well-sequenced chapters, each one focusing on a specific aspect of the communicative classroom. Each chapter presents a series of classroom scenarios (often taken from data collected by one of the authors or from work published by other researchers) that are particularly telling because they provide examples of actual classroom exchanges, not manufactured ones created to illustrate a point. The approach promoted in this volume is supported by second language acquisition (SLA) research. Over 90 sources appear in the Works Cited list. (I found 4 additional works cited that were not included in the list.) The research summaries are easy enough for the nonspecialist to follow. Although some special terminology is used, the book is not jargon-laden. Special terms are clearly defined. Several tie-ins to the National Standards are made, something particularly important for secondary-level programs where the bulk of the Standards implementation has thus far occurred. The approach is applicable to any foreign language classroom but most valuable for Spanish instructors because most examples are in Spanish.

Chapter 1 (“The Case for Classroom Communication”) lays the foundation for the arguments presented throughout the volume. Citing a good deal of SLA research, the authors provide reasons...
why a communicative approach is superior to a grammar-based one. They address teachers’ concerns about inaccuracy and explain that commission of errors is a part of the language learning process.

Chapter 2 (“The Role of Grammar in the Communicative Classroom”) first presents a brief discussion of two extreme viewpoints on the role of grammar in the classroom: “no grammar instruction” and “grammar for grammar’s sake” (p. 32). The authors do not question whether grammar should be taught but rather when and how. They contend “that grammar has value insofar as it supports communication” (pp. 34–35), emphasizing that students need not master an entire concept or structure to be able to use it correctly in communicative exercises.

The authors assert that the typical practice of presenting a grammar structure and immediately requiring students to produce it is not pedagogically sound. Instead, they argue that it is better to expose learners to the structure in meaningful contexts and allow them to comprehend its meaning before being required to produce it, an approach that puts fewer processing demands on learners.

This chapter provides valuable suggestions for converting immediate-production exercises into structured-input activities. The authors ask, “if students are required to attend to grammar for its meaning before they have to produce it, aren’t they in a position to use it more effectively when asked to do so?” (p. 40). This is a good question that leads to a criticism of the examples provided: Although students must understand the lexical meaning of the structures involved in order to complete the exercises accurately, they do not need to understand the grammatical meaning conveyed in the structures, which is the main point of structured-input activities. Nonetheless, the examples are far superior to the types of exercises they would replace.

Chapter 3 (“Activity Design and Lesson Planning in the Communicative Classroom”) presents ways of creating a communicatively oriented syllabus. Class is organized around real-world topics; the grammar and vocabulary covered is that which students need to know in order to carry out the communicative tasks successfully. These task-based activities (which, as the authors point out, parallel the “learning scenarios” described in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning) always have a goal that is clearly articulated to the students. The chapter includes models of interactive activities and guidelines for designing them.

Chapter 4 (“Evaluation of Oral Communication in the Communicative Classroom”) focuses on assessment. Stressing that testing should occur within naturalistic discourse contexts—which emphasize communicative goals—the authors acknowledge that divergent-response tests can be both time-consuming and impractical to administer. Various communicative but efficient formats for oral evaluation are presented.

Chapter 5 (“Classroom Interaction”) focuses on teacher-student(s) and student-student interaction. The authors discuss problems with the typical pattern whereby the teacher initiates the interaction, a student responds, and the teacher evaluates or gives feedback, or both. Acknowledging the appropriateness of this pattern for some types of exercises and presentations, they show that it limits student response, whereas with task-based activities, more students participate more often and more enthusiastically. The authors argue that—for most meaning-based activities—teachers should respond primarily to the meaning of what the student says and delay structural feedback until appropriate. They warn that teachers “who respond more to form than to content, may inadvertently convey the message to students that how they say something is more important than what they say” (p. 162).

This theoretically based, practically oriented volume is beneficial for teachers in both secondary and postsecondary programs. Spanish methods instructors will want to consider including it along with a more comprehensive foreign language methods text. The approach described in this volume can be used not only by those who intend to change their programs radically but also by those who wish to create more communicative activities around the vocabulary and grammar that already appear in their textbooks.

DIANA FRANTZEN
University of Wisconsin–Madison


Part of a set of professional books for language educators, Pedagogy of Language Learning in Higher Education is the second volume in the Advances in Foreign and Second Language Pedagogy series that is intended to bridge research and practice. It is international in scope, including authors and
reflecting programs from a number of countries and relating to both English as a second language and foreign language issues. Intended for future teachers, current educators, and researchers, the contents offer ideas to strengthen programs and facilitate reflective practice. The four sections of the text comprise articles grouped around four themes: learner motivation, classroom environment, relationships for learning, and preparing the future of language education.

In section 1, articles address strengthening programs, the effect of expectancy on attrition, service learning, and whether to teach entirely in the target language. Readers learn much about the importance of the successful program being linked to international studies, study abroad, and community outreach. They also come to understand more about the importance of students’ holding positive beliefs about their abilities to succeed in learning a particular language (even a less-commonly taught one) while at the same time highlighting the dangers of believing that language learning is a rapid process. One also learns that service learning (or internships) can be a vehicle for achieving positive attitudes. Finally, one also finds the research base that supports the judicious use of the students’ home language in the classroom.

Section 2 provides material on creative and artistic performance, creative writing, the use of hypertext projects, computer-based reading instruction, and film. The teacher can adapt ideas about performance from music, athletics, and drama. Research indicates that creative writing for intermediate students can, if carefully structured, increase both student satisfaction and progress in writing in the target language. The teacher also learns that students’ use of hypertext to create Web pages can also achieve the same effect as using film analysis in content-based instruction.

Authors in section 3 discuss student-centered instruction, the consultation model in teaching writing, and language learning centers. We are asked to face the fact that after decades of attention to communicative language teaching, many of us are still structuring teacher-centered classrooms. We are asked to consider the extreme needs of international students faced with quantities of academic writing in a language they are still learning, and we are asked to reflect on an effective structure for language learning centers and on the activities and interrelationships that could flourish in that context.

The final section highlights issues and technology in teacher preparation. An innovative immersion degree program for Japanese teachers is presented, as is the elephant in the closet of foreign language teacher preparation (and any type of teacher preparation), the urgent need for extensive and effective preparation of future teachers to use and create technological approaches and supports for learning a language. The final article appropriately emphasizes the need for new teachers to understand how they must vary their approaches according to the background of the students, the goals of the program and of the students themselves, and the teaching context and its resources. Thus the 15 articles reflect a variety of languages and levels and different types of programs and offer a somewhat unusual, yet beneficial international perspective.

The material in this text is well written and generally well researched. Because it includes an entire section of articles on foreign language teacher preparation, the text is probably best suited for higher education faculty in foreign languages and teacher preparation. Experienced teachers at other levels would also be interested in the ideas in the other sections on practice and programming, however; and future teachers could likewise benefit from them. Given the range and breadth of the material, however, the book could not serve as a textbook in a foreign language teacher preparation program except as a supplement to a more focused and sequenced text.

The grouping and section headings are not entirely felicitous. For example, two of the three articles on relationships are not about relationships in the classroom; and the five articles on technology and the media could have comprised a section of their own. The topic of language learning by immersion also appears in more than one article (with in-country immersion as a component of teacher training in one, which is an interesting idea) and might have served as a category. One small problem arises with an inconsistency in the use of terminology: CBI means content-based instruction in one article and computer-based instruction in another; the alert reader must compensate for this shift.

The divergence of the material is both its strength and its weakness. Readers will reflect on many different issues in language teaching and on the considerations involved in teaching in different contexts. The articles would certainly facilitate the teacher trainer’s attempts to bring this variation to the students’ attention and would also assist the in-service teacher in considering how to adapt to new circumstances.

The book can be read at many different levels.
The reader can look for teaching ideas, and the administrator can search for valid suggestions on program improvement or reorganization. Its description of projects surveying students provides insights for those seeking to understand student motivation and the classroom practices that may influence it. All in all, this volume will be an important and useful addition to the professional library and potentially useful as a course text.

BARBARA GONZÁLEZ–PINO
The University of Texas at San Antonio


This collection of eight original essays by leading researchers in learner-focused second language learning explores the ways in which learners contribute to the language learning process and suggests new models for research in second language acquisition and learning (SLA). The book, part of the Longman series on Applied Linguistics and Language Study, originated from a colloquium at the annual meeting of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (1998) that examined varied research perspectives on the learner. Each contributor addresses two questions: (a) What contributions of the learner appear to affect language learning most? and (b) What learner contributions still need more research? As Breen suggests in his introduction, an underlying theme of the book is why learners achieve differentially under apparently similar learning conditions.

The book begins with a substantial preface from general editor Christopher Candlin, in which he notes that the book underscores the importance of the social and contextual dimensions to understand the language learner. Candlin reexamines these concepts and suggests how to think of them in more sophisticated and productive ways. This theme is continued throughout the book, especially in Breen’s introduction and postscript as well as in his own chapter. Breen’s other major contribution is the organization of the chapters so that there is an almost seamless flow of ideas, rare in an edited volume. Early chapters examine in a fairly specific way classic learner attributes associated with cognitive and psycholinguistic research, whereas later chapters focus on the learner within a broad social context. To help make these perspectives on learners comprehensible for readers, Breen provides a useful summary figure of chapter contents in his introduction and returns to it in his postscript.

The first three chapters are what the reader would expect in a learner-focused text. Larsen-Freeman provides an excellent review of research on individual cognitive and affective learner contributions. Chamot focuses on learning strategies in SLA, points out weaknesses in current research, and calls for the examination of the transfer of language learning strategies and the relationship between learning strategies and cultural beliefs and values. Wenden argues that metacognitive knowledge is a neglected variable in SLA research and uses specific data to show how learners analyze task demands metacognitively.

From this point, the book moves to less well-established perspectives on the learner. Both Rod Ellis and Rebecca Oxford explore the construction of identity. Ellis examines how learners, in contrast to SLA researchers, construct language learning, suggesting that metaphor analysis can be a useful consciousness-raising tool for both researchers and learners. On a closely related theme, Oxford uses student written narratives to explore learner conceptions of teachers and raises the possibility of the narrative as a new way to gain access to learner attitudes. Breen’s chapter examines learner participation in class and its role in learning. For Breen, notions about this relationship are constrained by narrow research perspectives, namely the neglect of the socioaffective dimension. Breen takes on a recent debate among SLA theorists, arguing that the mainstream view evident in much SLA research that equates language with grammar is misguided. He advocates instead a stance that incorporates the learner’s “navigation of classroom discourse” (p. 134) and outlines specific research tactics that future researchers need to follow. Lantolf and Pavlenko likewise grapple with fundamental questions pertaining to SLA research, suggesting that much would be gained from a hermeneutic approach, specifically activity theory, which advocates analyzing human thinking in the context of its natural environment. They see benefit in examining how learner agency affects learning and advocate detailed case studies of persons “on the periphery of linguistic communities” (p. 155) with attention to how they gain or fail to gain access to these communities. Norton continues this attention to outliers in her examination of resistant and nonparticipating learners in language classrooms. Drawing upon specific cases,
she suggests that a language learner’s lack of participation may result from that learner’s imagined curriculum being at odds with the teacher’s vision. The book concludes with Breen’s postscript, which briefly summarizes the chapters and then defends what some readers of this book will surely see as a lack of focus on the role of the learner’s first language and the learner’s cognitive processes. Yet it is the emphasis on such factors and the parallel lack of attention to broader socioaffective issues that Breen views as limiting progress in current SLA research. He argues forcefully that we need a complementary relationship between psycholinguistic and social and affective perspectives. Although he admits that he is advocating a complex vision of SLA research, he suggests that it is attainable if we think in terms of clusters of learner variables, conduct more longitudinal research, and search not just for variables that are generalizable, but also for those that reveal learner differences.

This is an extraordinarily well-written and well-organized text with important insights for SLA theory, research, and practice. Breen has done an exemplary job in making the diverse perspectives of the distinguished authors into a coherent collection that not only addresses the need for greater attention to social variables, but also offers concrete models and examples to guide researchers in this area. Indeed, this may well be one of the most important works in a decade; it is a collection sure to influence future SLA research.

ROBERTA VANN
Iowa State University


Using Surveys in Language Learning presents a theoretical and practical overview of survey research for curriculum development and research purposes. It contains a wealth of essential information for language teachers, administrators, and researchers who use survey tools in their daily work.

The book consists of six chapters that cover phases and activities in the development and implementation of surveys. Each chapter concludes with a running example that is common to all chapters, as well as rotating examples that differ from chapter to chapter. In addition, the end of each chapter includes a summary, suggestions for further reading, a glossary of terms, review questions, and application exercises. Nine appendixes contain samples of questionnaires and interview questions that were used in various projects.

The book is clearly written and well organized. It is primarily practical in its orientation, yet the theoretical background from different disciplines makes it more than a how-to manual. Most important, Brown brings survey research to life by describing his own experience with various aspects of planning, designing, compiling, analyzing, and reporting survey data.

Chapter 1, “Planning a Survey Project,” focuses on the stages involved in developing survey projects: planning; designing a survey instrument; and gathering, compiling, and analyzing the data. Particularly useful are discussions of different types of scales and characteristics of good research questions.

Chapter 2, “Designing a Survey Instrument,” covers issues such as types of questions and response formats (including a useful discussion of the pros and cons of open vs. closed responses), as well as guidelines for writing good survey questions and putting them together to form a good questionnaire. The author stresses the need to use a combination of data-gathering techniques, rather than rely on a single instrument.

Chapter 3, “Gathering and Compiling Survey Data,” focuses on gathering survey information and compiling it for further analysis. Brown discusses sampling, the pros and cons of interviews versus questionnaires, and techniques for survey administration. This chapter also outlines the steps in coding and transcribing survey data.

Chapter 4, “Analyzing Survey Data Statistically,” is the longest (98 pages) and the most technical part of the book. Although it does not contain much new information for readers familiar with basic descriptive and interpretive statistics, it is extremely useful for those who are not familiar with the use of statistics or Excel spreadsheets. Although the material in this chapter can be found in most standard statistics textbooks, including it in this book makes the latter a one-stop source of information on all aspects of survey research. My only criticism of this section is that it is too long. It could have easily been broken up into two chapters on descriptive and interpretive statistics, respectively. This division would also have helped to highlight the important discussion of reliability and validity that is currently buried in a mass of other information.
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Chapter 5, “Analyzing Survey Data Qualitatively,” starts with a definition of qualitative research and proceeds to divide it into three stages: reducing open-ended data to manageable size; displaying the data (e.g., transcribing, using matrices for display, and using computers for analysis); and interpreting the displayed data. Brown emphasizes that it is equally important to establish reliability and validity in qualitative and quantitative research. He presents different strategies for drawing useful and informative conclusions from qualitative data, such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, plus a detailed explanation of triangulation as an important technique for putting qualitative research on a solid empirical footing. The chapter concludes with an explanation of the use of statistical methods for some aspects of qualitative data collection such as degree of inter- and intracoder and inter- and intrarater agreement.

In chapter 6, “Reporting on a Survey Project,” Brown presents several ways in which survey reports can be organized, ranging from the strictly-prescribed APA format for quantitatively-based surveys to the relatively flexible organization for qualitatively-based reports. The appendixes contain samples of questionnaires used in the running and rotating examples used in the six chapters. Readers can benefit by studying the wording of the questions and the format and organization of the questionnaires. It would have been helpful to include a brief introduction to each questionnaire, such as in Appendix F.

With just enough theory and lots of practical information, Using Surveys in Language Learning is destined to become a standard reference for language practitioners who plan to conduct surveys for curricular or research purposes. Don’t start a survey project without it.

IRENE THOMPSON
The George Washington University (Emerita)


In this volume, the author engages in philosophical discussions of numerous issues and challenges within the field of applied linguistics. The 14 chapters of the book are divided into six sections, entitled “Language and Education,” “Second Language Learning,” “Language in British Education,” “Literature and Education,” “The Politics of Language Teaching,” and “Research and Understanding.” Brumfit addresses language teaching and learning from broad interdisciplinary perspectives, recognizing that the “linguistics of education” cannot avoid psychological, sociological, ethical, economic, historical, political as well as pedagogical considerations” (p. xii).

Although Brumfit specifically addresses language education policy issues in Great Britain and focuses on the use and teaching of English as a world language, many issues raised are relevant to the U.S. context and to contexts of teaching languages other than English. Certainly, the tendency for educational policy related to language education to be set often by nonlinguists or applied linguists is true for both countries.

Brumfit points out that the majority of the world’s English speakers do not speak English as their first language. He seems to attribute the spread of English mainly to the economic hegemony of the United States rather than to British colonial history, and he offers an almost utopian charter of entitlement for British language education. According to Brumfit, all learners are entitled to develop (a) their own mother tongue or dialect to maximum confident and effective use; (b) competence in a range of styles of English for educational, work-based, social, and public-life purposes; (c) their knowledge of how language operates in a multilingual society; and (d) as extensive as possible a practical competence in at least one foreign language (p. 82).

Although the charter calls for equal emphasis on all four strands, Brumfit recognizes that “effective use of the language(s) of work, public life, and government are essential endpoints for participation in democratic processes . . . and necessary minimum conditions for adult life” (p. 80). He also admits to the constraints of resource limitations and local demands and needs, which immediately detract from the supposed universality of his recommendations. Although acknowledging that language is at the core of personal and cultural identity, Brumfit does not address the political issue of why a government should spend taxpayers’ monies to develop or maintain identities in culture(s) other than its own. Like the United States, Britain must grapple with finding effective ways of maintaining the rich linguistic resources of its immigrant population that do not detract from their developing a high competence in English for political, social, educational,
and economic participation in the dominant culture. Discussions related to learning languages other than English entail quite different considerations.

Most of the topics discussed in the volume reflect the usual array encountered in the professional literature, such as language policy, language in teacher education, communicative competence and language teaching, and approaches to research. I was pleased to see the author venture into some relatively uncommon (but eminently relevant) territories, such as reflections on the role of literature and the place and problems of cultural studies in language education. Brumfit does not shy away from discussing such matters as the nature of literature, the role of a literary canon and its intimate relationship with values, and the problems of assessing literary competence given that successful reading of literature involves interpretation and that assessing personal interpretation (i.e., matters of judgment) is a complex process that cannot easily be accomplished (if at all) in large-scale examinations. He maintains that only "when the debate moves away from [literary] content to what we do with literary texts, that genuine literary issues can be addressed" (p. 92).

Of particular interest, at least to this reader, was the section on "The Politics of Language Teaching," in which Brumfit focuses on the definition and role of British cultural studies in language education, teaching English as a world language, and language rights. In his attempt to (re)define applied linguistics in the final chapter of the book, Brumfit engages in a lucid discussion of postmodernism in applied linguistics and offers his view of how applied linguistics should respond.

Individual Freedom in Language Teaching is written for readers already familiar with the field of applied linguistics. Although it offers no new theories or research findings, it presents lucid, thought-provoking analyses and philosophical reflections on political, educational, and social issues that all scholars involved in language education should find relevant. Although the reader may not always agree with Brumfit’s views (this reader, for instance, disagrees with a number of tenets or interpretations offered by the author that cannot be elaborated here), the volume makes for stimulating reading and provides an impulse for the examination of one’s own ideas and beliefs. Unfortunately, the title of the book is not fully descriptive of its contents, given that discussion of individual freedom in language teaching and language use do not constitute the main focus of the book. Brumfit himself recognizes that although the rules of language systems and language use are in constant flux, the teacher “has to act as if they are stable and nonnegotiable to offer a supportive base for learners” (p. xi). A more appropriate title might have assured the volume the wide readership among applied linguists that it deserves.

RENATE A. SCHULZ
University of Arizona


This volume adheres to the well-established series format of an introductory section followed by chapters in which a mental organizer for the topic(s) precedes the argumentation and a concluding summary is augmented by study questions. An ample bibliography accompanies the index. This structure encourages the book’s adoption for advanced methods courses or sustained inservice programs.

To read the book, which this reviewer recommends, is to be both heartened and dismayed. Although one is pleased to reflect on the role that gender (be it that of the student, the class as a unit, or the teacher) can play in a language classroom, the dismay arises when Chavez advises us that there is an insufficient research base to allow for more than generalizations that themselves explode the limited horizon of a traditional research-based comfort zone. The complexity of gender issues in teaching, so well illustrated by the author and her references, as a broad but thin field, may well (mis)lead the reader to conclude that this particular field of endeavor can deliver but a meager harvest. That is not the case; rather, it may be too early in the growing season to reach definitive conclusions.

Chavez is to be congratulated for thoroughness and even-handed candor. In virtually every chapter—especially those concerning achievement, interaction, curriculum, and strategic preferences (this last to a lesser extent)—we are reminded that more investigation (and of different types) is needed. The first chapters survey general concerns on gender in education; they are neatly contrasted with popular beliefs. As Chavez begins with the statement, “Gender matters but . . . with the qualification of ‘under certain cir-
cumstances’ or ‘differently,’ depending on the circumstances” (p. xv), we learn that gender has not often been considered in achievement studies, for instance. And so our search for the answers and classroom-ready applications must remain elusive and, uncomfortably, not conclusive.

The confounding, oxymoronically-immutable variables so related to the topic make this book worth reading and may even spur some to investigate a subset of the theme formally. In addition, the extensive summaries of investigations by Oxford, Ehrman, and Nyikos on learner strategies, as well as the welcome updated discussion to Oxford’s (1990) still-useful volume on the same topic, become a beacon amidst a murky panorama. That only its second half (chapters 5–8) concentrates specifically on second language matters is both an advantage and a drawback to the book. Chavez affords an extensive overview of female/male behaviors in education but thereby is unable to fend off the affective downer for the reader, who senses a dashing of hopes for straightforward applications. Indeed, her evident expertise whets our appetite for specific recommendations, of which there can be but few at present. Thus, the discussion of the work of Oxford and others (chapter 7) ameliorates our sense of frustration, although it also implies that the topic at hand may well be condemned to a perpetual state where necessary qualifying variables can only remain dependent, not fixed. Even with so many variables at play, Chavez cannot account for the intertwined issues of gender and social change for U.S. students, nor for the continuously-evolving nature of the other language cultures that we desire that our students affirm with linguistic propriety. Chavez correctly advises against binary definitions of gender relations, although not much space was devoted to Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender issues, especially in English as a second language, most likely a consequence of a dearth of research in this area.

The book contained some six editing errors (e.g., Lange, not Lang, p. xviii). These are minor and do not detract from the value of the exposition. Although at times formulaic in her exposition, Chavez succeeds in making important points, especially in suggesting areas for future research. In a revision to this volume, one minor quibble must be revisited: the uneven references to authors and their investigations. Some are cited by full name, perhaps as a way to acknowledge the significant contribution of women to this field. But the citations are carried to an extreme, particularly on p. 176. To remind the reader more than once on a page that Oxford’s first name is Rebecca may be excessive, or may be perceived as padding.

Despite the inconclusive nature of the topic, this reviewer supports the advice that Chavez and others offer—that there is and must continue to be a role in our profession for gender. It does matter, and the conscientious suggestions that, say, Oxford and Lavine (1992) make, become part of the gender and language learning studies that we look forward to reading in the future. There must be, as Chavez suggests, less discussion on a superficial level and more research and enactment upon that research. Through these means we provide appropriate education to students. How large the role of gender studies will be for our profession and how her research in this area may be applied locally remain to be seen. Chavez has given us excellent steps in the right direction.

PAUL A. GARCÍA
University of Kansas


This is the book on motivation that applied linguists, language teachers, researchers, and pedagogy students have long awaited. Part of the Applied Linguistics in Action series, it integrates information on motivation from many arenas outside of the second language (L2) field: general psychology, work psychology, educational psychology, cognitive psychology, and others. It brings this information into focus and sets it alongside the specific research and theorizing offered by the L2 field. The book is almost encyclopedic in its scope, but its organization is surprisingly straightforward and accessible. The reader finds it easy to locate key issues because of a well-constructed format and both a subject index and an author index. Although this book has been in my possession only a matter of months, I have already dog-eared scores of the most important pages, to which I am certain to return for many years to come.

The most outstanding feature is the author’s competence in identifying complex concepts, making each one understandable without any watering-down of meaning, and showing clear relationships among them. This volume demonstrates Dörnyei’s amazing ability to synthesize in

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a thought-provoking, fruitful way theories and research pulled from hundreds of disparate sources. The editors of the series, Candlin and Hall, have asked all the authors in the series to present a landscape of their particular topic (in this case, motivation), in which they identify main concepts, scope, competing issues, questions, research modalities, instructional implications, and resources. In all of these aspects of the mission, Dörnyei has succeeded handsomely.

The first section of the book, “What Is Motivation?” covers 100 pages. It starts by presenting the main challenges of motivation research, such as consciousness versus unconsciousness, cognition versus affect, reductionism versus comprehensiveness, context, time, and the learner’s simultaneous focus on many different goals and activities (parallel multiplicity). Next, this section offers key motivation theories in psychology, sociocultural and contextual influences on motivated behavior, and the often-neglected temporal aspect of motivation (i.e., motivation is not a static phenomenon in a given person; it changes over time, which, of course, is linked to circumstance). These general themes then give way to specific background theories on L2 motivation. Included are Gardner’s socioeducational model, expectancy-value theories, self-determination in language learning, Schumann’s neurobiological model, Dörnyei and Otto’s process model, and other theoretical and research-related topics in the L2 motivation field. I found this whole section extremely appealing because of its many theoretical charts, concept outlines, and synopses of specific studies, all presented in clear, easy-to-locate boxes, highlighted quotations from theorists providing summaries, challenges, and humorous statements, and the author’s own clear enthusiasm for the subject matter. Although I had, in the past, read and synthesized many works in the areas discussed here, while reading this section I found myself following Dörnyei into conceptual relationships that I had not yet considered. The first section’s clarity of presentation would appeal to novices as well as to those with significant background knowledge in this area.

The second section is entitled “Motivation and Language Teaching.” Here Dörnyei presents education-friendly approaches in L2 motivation research, including those of Gardner and colleagues, Crookes and Schmidt, Oxford and Shearin, Williams and Burden, and naturally Dörnyei himself. He describes the historical evolution of thinking about motivational concepts in our field from the 1960s through the current time, with interesting highlights on changes and expansions of the 1990s. The section also includes a discussion of research and theory on motivation and motivating in the L2 classroom, peppered with ideas from experts such as Csikszentmihalyi, the creator of the flow concept. Two of my favorite parts of this section concern demotivation and teacher motivation, relatively new areas of study that will gain more attention in the future.

The third section, “Researching Motivation,” is a step-by-step exposition of issues, problems, decisions, and steps in motivational research. Of particular interest are the pages on research design and self-report measures of motivation. In addition, many budding researchers will go for guidance to the discussion of main types of motivation research in the L2 field. These types include survey studies, factor analytical studies, correlational studies, structural equation modeling, experimental studies, qualitative studies, and combined studies.

The most appealing part of the final section, entitled “Resources and Further Information,” is the listing of relevant journals, magazines, databases, abstracting journals, discussion groups, and measurement instruments. I can envision thousands of teachers, graduate students, professors, and researchers heading for this well-compiled section.

I found this book a delight to read. It challenged my thinking, offered coherence to a vast array of theories and research studies, identified significant gaps and conflicts in motivation research, and provided inspiration for conducting further research in the area. If I were to find fault with any part of this book, it would be the numbering system for quotations, examples, concept boxes, and so on. The numbers are often identical to the numbers used for subchapters, although the number for a given quotation does not always relate to the subchapter with the same number. This became a little disconcerting at times. After a while I found that simply ignoring some of the numbers simplified the reading process. Overall, this book is essential for all those wanting to understand, use, and conduct research on L2 motivation, and it will also help thoughtful instructors teach in a motivating way. The book may also prove enlightening to many researchers and theorists outside of the L2 field because of the excellent way that it treats motivation theories both across and within disciplines.

REBECCA L. OXFORD
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This book is a thorough revision of the highly-acclaimed second language acquisition (SLA) textbook published in 1994. Two influential researchers, Gass and Selinker, have once again produced an introductory textbook that is lucid and easy to read, containing comprehensive and detailed reviews of contemporary SLA research. Although the authors modestly acknowledge that “a truly introductory treatment of our field is difficult to achieve” (p. xvi), they have nonetheless succeeded in making the subject matter interesting and informative to a broad audience. Indeed, this textbook is suitable for students at any level who wish to study linguistics and language acquisition but have little background in these areas.

The book is divided into 14 chapters, each one ending with a summary section, suggestions for additional reading, and a list of questions and activities titled “Points for Discussion.” Three new chapters on child language acquisition, Universal Grammar, and instructed SLA are welcome additions to this second edition. Many of the previous chapters have also been updated and contain sections on recent theoretical developments, such as interlanguage transfer, the aspect and discourse hypotheses, explicit versus implicit knowledge, connectionism, replication of research findings, and so on.

In chapter 1, the authors provide a series of definitions covering the basic components of language to familiarize readers with terms in SLA. In chapter 2, they present three sets of interlanguage data (plural, verb + -ing, and prepositions) with step-by-step instructions for interpretation and analysis, followed by a detailed review of different methodologies for data elicitation and analysis.

Chapter 3 gives a historical overview of the role of native language in SLA, whereas chapter 5 discusses the role of previously-acquired languages in SLA, tracing the history of language transfer concepts from the morpheme order studies to interlanguage transfer. Chapter 4 introduces aspects of child language acquisition, both first and second. Developmental paths in first language acquisition such as babbling, words, and inflectional morphemes are explained in detail. For second language acquisition, the role of language transfer is specified and studies on morpheme order are described.

In chapters 6 and 7, Gass and Selinker specify how linguistic perspectives account for language acquisition by discussing the concepts of language universals (i.e., typological universals and Universal Grammar) and their relationship to SLA. Chapter 8 is a discussion of how psycholinguistic approaches account for SLA, including processing models such as the competition model, the monitor model, alternative modes of knowledge representation, and connectionism.

In chapter 9, entitled “Interlanguage in Context,” the authors provide a detailed sociolinguistic viewpoint towards the nature of SLA and examine social and contextual variables that affect the learning and production of a second language. Issues of variation, communication strategies, and interlanguage pragmatics are fully discussed. Chapters 10 and 11 examine the roles of input, interaction, and output for second language comprehension and production. Chapter 11 focuses on SLA in the classroom context, with a concise discussion of the role of instruction. Key issues such as input processing, teachability and learnability, and focus on form are neatly summarized. Chapter 12 deals with individual differences among learners, including age, aptitude, motivation, and sociopsychological influences, and their impact on second language acquisition. Chapter 13 is dedicated to research on lexicon. Major issues such as the development of lexical knowledge, incidental and incremental vocabulary learning, and psycholinguistic processes concerning lexical perception, production, and knowledge stores are covered.

In chapter 14, the authors close with an eloquent overview that integrates the various aspects of SLA discussed in the previous chapters, in the context of Gass’s earlier work (1988) on SLA processes.

Both instructors and students should find this textbook an excellent choice for an introductory SLA course because of its theory-to-practice approach. Coverage of SLA as a field is broad and well balanced with up-to-date summaries of contemporary research. Students engaged in the discussion questions and activities suggested in the “Points for Discussion” sections will be challenged to test their comprehension of the text content and put their knowledge into practice. The textbook also provides a glossary of key terms and subject and author indexes. It is worth mentioning that the workbook by Gass, Sorace, and Selinker (1999) is an excellent companion to...
this new text, providing students with second language data for a clearer understanding of the theoretical and methodological principles underlying these interlanguage data sets. If this book has any room for improvement, perhaps the glossary could be expanded to include definitions of key concepts such as explicit versus implicit knowledge, focus on form versus focus on formatics, and incidental learning. It is otherwise difficult to find fault with this well-crafted and delightfully-written book.

In summary, this textbook has successfully achieved its purpose to provide a stimulating introduction to the principles of SLA and should provide students with sufficient background material for pursuing scholarly investigations in more specialized areas. I highly recommend Gass and Selinker’s second edition as a textbook for any graduate-level introductory SLA course.

MARIKO MOROISHI WEI
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The purpose of this latest book in Pearson’s Learning about Language series is to introduce theoretical and practical issues for students beginning their study of foreign language (FL) teaching. The book consists of three parts: “Background,” “Learning,” and “Teaching.” The first chapter sets the scene by describing the extent to which FLs are being learned in today’s multilingual world. In the remaining background chapters, the author describes characteristics of a diverse range of FL learners, briefly introduces some common FL teaching methods, discusses FL learning, and reviews the empiricist and mentalist traditions and the later sociolinguistic revolution that have shaped modern FL teaching in important ways. The “What Is There to Learn” chapter follows Canale and Swain’s (1980) model of communicative competence; that is, grammatical, sociolinguistic, and strategic competence, although the author refers to grammatical competence as systemic competence.

The “Learning” section treats each of the following topics: the significance of learners’ errors from the contrastive analysis days until modern times; characteristics of acquisition, such as the learning/acquisition distinction and the importance of input and output; theories of acquisition, such as Krashen’s input hypothesis, Swain’s output hypothesis, and Schumann’s acculturation theory; learning and acquisition from a procedural or declarative knowledge point of view; cognitive, affective, and personality variables of FL learners; and characteristics and strategies of good language learners.

Part 3 begins by briefly tracing the history of FL teaching from the mid-19th-century grammar-translation method to modern communicative and task-based teaching. Then this section outlines the significance of sociopolitical contexts of FL teaching, discusses types of syllabus design (structural and notional-functional), presents ways of conveying language to learners, outlines the speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, and gives an overview of FL testing.

The author incorporates several features that enhance the readability of the book. The introduction of each chapter outlines the chapter’s contents, and the conclusion summarizes the important points in the chapter. Another helpful feature is the inclusion of numerous text boxes that present illustrative linguistic data and fascinating case studies of the concepts under discussion. In one text box, for example, the author cites the case of Christopher, a brain-damaged individual who can barely handle daily tasks such as dressing himself but is able to read, write, and communicate in up to 20 languages (p. 122). Although many of the examples are of English, also represented are French, German, Polish, Russian, and Spanish. The author also provides numerous occasions for readers to reflect on their personal experiences with the language issues presented in the chapter.

The book is written in a straightforward, unbiased, reader-friendly style. It covers a wide range of current and historical facets of the learning and teaching of FLs without bogging readers down with a great deal of theory. Most of the accepted authorities in the field are cited. Research and theory originating on both sides of the Atlantic are presented. Although the content is for the most part representative of the field, the inclusion of the Vygotskian sociocultural theoretical framework as applied to FL learning, as well as the application of computer-assisted-language learning (CALL), would make the book more comprehensive, because both of these areas have contributed significantly to recent literature in the field.

One rather annoying aspect of the book is the author’s frequent reference to his own previous
work. He very often says, “In Johnson (year) I...” The culmination of his dominating presence is his claim that the best way to find out how structural syllabuses are constructed is to interview someone who has designed them. Then he presents a two-page transcript of an interview that he conducted with himself, labeling the speakers as “MAAL” (me as applied linguist) and “MAMD” (me as materials designer), and refers back to these individuals throughout the ensuing discussion of the interview. These occurrences detract from the otherwise objective writing style.

All in all, An Introduction to Foreign Language Learning and Teaching is a soundly-written text that would be very appropriate for prospective FL teachers at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. The content is appropriate, uncomplicated, and engaging. The book therefore achieves its intended goal of introducing theoretical and practical issues pertinent to the learning and teaching of foreign languages.

MARK DARHOWER
North Carolina University


As the title suggests, this volume develops the possible relationships between native languages (L1) and instructed second languages (L2). Specifically, it focuses on the possible influences that the acquisition of a L2 can bear on L1 knowledge and skills. The topic is, therefore, unexpected, accustomed as we are to thinking about transfer from the L1 to the L2. The point of the volume is precisely to broaden the concept of transfer, not only to switch its direction (L2 to L1, rather than L1 to L2) but to exploit the notion of a common underlying competence, characteristic of bilinguals, that lies at the basis of performance in both the L1 and the L2 (but not restricted to these two in the case of multilinguals). In the case of multilinguals, the notion of transfer from one language to another disappears, as knowledge and skills acquired in any language are added to the common underlying competence, which mediates between languages.

At the heart of the volume lies an experimen-
This latest addition to the AAUSC Issues in Language Program Direction series is a well-edited volume that will provide much food for thought as well as practical direction for language program directors (LPDs) and others concerned with university language programs. After a one-page tribute to Theodore Higgs and a brief introduction to the volume, we find nine contributions that address with varying degrees of breadth or specificity the professional development of teaching assistants (TAs) and other instructors of postsecondary foreign language courses.

The piece by Jay Siskin (with Jim Davis) that opens the volume provides a historical perspective by reviewing the educational literature on mentoring in general, as well as the literature on TA supervision. It also enumerates obstacles to the development of mentoring relationships within TA training programs.

The chapter by Elizabeth Guthrie is one of two in the volume that address the broad questions of the content of TA training and of the language instruction offered in the program, the place of the language program within a language and literature department, and the relationship between these two questions. The other piece is Patricia Chaput’s “Language Teaching: Raising Expectations for Instructor Preparation.” Both Guthrie and Chaput echo the perennial lament of the separation of so-called language skills courses and content courses (literature, civilization, linguistics) and the concomitant devaluing of the former. Guthrie’s call for integration of language study with literary and cultural studies is rooted in new perspectives on language study that see it as inherently valuable in its own right because, when rightly practiced, it “include[s] reflection upon the ways in which culturally situated discourse systems create and reproduce social as well as individual meanings” (p. 29). Guthrie rightly notes that this is a tall order, and her idealism is tempered by occasional deference to a healthy realism, based on her awareness of the unwieldiness of multisection language programs and of the fact that the kind of integration described would require a major reorganization in the existing division of labor. Guthrie offers a handful of examples of curricular revision projects that have moved in this direction, but this reader is left with the impression that such significant change will be realizable only in rare departments with rather special circumstances.

Chaput’s chapter, however, avoids the possible implication of Guthrie’s approach that language courses need to be suffused with intellectual content from the literature side of the department by pointing out that language study has content of its own that is both linguistic and cultural in nature. Chaput’s approach to bridging the split between language and literature also seems more feasible than Guthrie’s, because Chaput proposes to effect change through innovation in the preparation of graduate students for their future language teaching responsibilities. Her excellent outline of the knowledge and abilities of the competent language instructor are a much-needed antidote to the long-prevailing view of teacher education as focused on the learning of techniques, to the detriment of any knowledge of content. The content in question is broad-ranging, from grammatical, with an emphasis on pedagogical grammar, to sociolinguistic, to knowledge of how the various linguistic skills are acquired. The chapter also includes a section where Chaput debunks a set of assumptions concerning the superiority of native-speaker instructors and another section in which she proposes an extensive set of interview questions for language teaching candidates.

Elizabeth Bernhardt’s piece looks at the potential for conflict in programs where instructors represent two cultures, briefly describable as pre- and post-second language acquisition, or veteran instructors and younger colleagues. Although this situation does not seem likely to occur in most institutions, Bernhardt’s call for realism in recognizing the diversity of the teaching staff is well taken.

The excessively long piece (29 pp.) by Betty Lou Leaver and Rebecca Oxford is an application of information about learning styles to the mentoring of teachers. Although language program directors (LPDs) should be aware of such differences, one could ask how the busy LPD could possibly implement some of the suggestions given here for individualization of mentoring, such as coteaching with mentees.

Sangeeta Dhawan’s piece on reflective practice, a case study of her supervision of one TA’s action research project, does not seem particularly generalizable. Again, to do such a project with multiple mentees would be extremely time-consuming. Therefore, the author’s suggestion of a sequel course to the methods course for such projects seems a good alternative.

I highly recommend the chapter on international TAs in the foreign language classroom by Cynthia Chalupa and Anne Lair. Most LPDs are probably well aware of the problems the authors
document in their study, but their interdepartmental training model provides a realistic means of equipping these TAs better to deal with their unique situation.

John Klapper’s chapter describes an elaborate program for development of part-time, casual language teaching staff in U.K. universities, which follows broader initiatives to improve teaching in these institutions. The comparison to American programs is not flattering.

Finally, Richard Robin’s contribution encapsulates the difficulties of dependence on part-time instructors with a study of their roles as Russian instructors in Washington, D.C. colleges and universities. Although I question the proposed teaching load of eight semester courses per year, I heartily applaud Robin’s proposal to replace the quixotic plans of the past that called for all tenure-track faculty with a realistic compromise that would create full-time positions with significant benefits for instructors whose primary responsibility is the teaching of language.

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ARABIC


This volume is a collection of 13 papers, some of which were delivered at the First International Conference on Contrastive Rhetoric held at The American University in Cairo in 1999. The papers are grouped into four sections. The first, “Arabic Language: Distinctive Features,” focuses on the Arabic “philosophy of tense, syntax, and the teaching of the Quran” (p. v). The following three sections are “Arabic and English: Comparative Studies”; “Writing: Learning Style and Form”; and “Language Acquisition: Attitudes and Comprehension.” As these section titles indicate, the papers cover a wide variety of topics.

I was drawn to this volume because of its focus on contrastive studies in English and Arabic, a needed area of research. The literature on Arabic is so sparse outside of the Arab world that many writers and researchers continue to use outdated sources, such as Shouby (1951). This volume is, therefore, a welcome addition to the literature on Arabic, particularly Egyptian Arabic, that is available to the international community. I hope that it is distributed widely outside of Egypt.

Recent research on second language learning is looking more closely at the social context of learners. One aspect of this context is the culture of schooling. In reading this volume, one can glean information on facets of Egyptian education that relate to and affect the teaching and learning of English. For example, the importance of British poetry in the English language curriculum is illustrated by Youssef’s paper on teaching the form of the sonnet. In spite of the popularity of British literature in the English language curriculum, Horger’s attitudinal study indicates that students at The American University in Cairo preferred American over British terminology (e.g., “trunk” of a car over “boot”).

In a paper discussing the impact of Arabic on expository writing in English, Sheikhholeslami and Makhlof poignantly describe the effects of large classes and the use of models of school essays on the teaching of English composition. They note that in “Egyptian schools today, there is virtually no rhetorical instruction in writing [Arabic]” (p. 128). These authors also present a noteworthy critique of existing contrastive rhetoric studies that compare Arabic and English.

Like other volumes of this type, this work suffers from a lack of thematic coherence. The papers address a range of disparate and specialized topics, ranging from a study of the color terminology in Egyptian Arabic (Allam) to a description of Aristotelian rhetoric (Hottel-Burkhart). In addition, the types of papers vary, perhaps reflecting an unclear sense of audience. Some papers address pedagogical issues (e.g., Stewart on problems in teaching the Quran), others are based on research (e.g., Horger on attitudes of students toward American and British terminology), whereas others are descriptive (e.g., Hottel-Burkhart on Aristotelian rhetoric) or linguistic (Ghaly on the syntax of proverbs). It would have been helpful if the editors had provided their rationale for grouping by writing an introduction to each of the four sections. As it is, readers must find (or not find) their own unifying themes.

The research papers seem particularly problematic and might have benefited from the peer-review process of a refereed publication. For example, a study on the metadiscourse of English and Arabic argumentative writing (El Seidi) does not include a methodology section. The reader does not know the manner in which the essays were coded to obtain the results presented or
whether the researcher used multiple coders. No intercoder reliability figures are presented. Al-lam’s paper on the use of color terminology would be stronger if she had used additional referencing. For example, she notes that in English, “white is used to describe something radically conservative” (p. 79). Statements such as this one need support, given that they may not match popular perceptions.

These weaknesses (e.g., lack of a thematic focus and of editing on some of the research papers) are small when compared to the need for more published material comparing Arabic and English, a need that this volume begins to fill. Particular papers in the volume will be of interest to applied linguists, particularly those who teach or train students who will teach Arabic to native English speakers or English to native Arabic speakers. Although several papers do not refer explicitly to pedagogy, astute teachers can make connections between the content of some of the papers and the second language classroom. Papers that have pedagogical implications include Kassabgy and Hassan’s “Relativization in English and Arabic: A Bidirectional Study,” Al-Khawalda’s “The Expression of Futurity in the Arabic and English Languages,” and Kasem’s “The Acquisition of the English Copula by Native Speakers of Lebanese Arabic: A Developmental Perspective.” For linguists interested in Arabic, this volume is likely to be useful as an excellent reference book.

GAYLE L. NELSON  
Georgia State University


This new addition to works on discourse analysis contains a comparative study of English and Arabic written texts. Although there are several studies on discourse analysis in English and Arabic, this study focuses on a specific variant of journalistic discourse, the short news item. The author provides a rationale for the choice of this type of data by claiming that restricting the samples to this type ensures homogeneity of the corpus. He maintains that short news items are easy to quote and analyze fully and in depth. Another important reason is that short news items have not yet been studied and that they are suitable for this investigation because grounding values appear in such texts “in close succession” (p. 6). This book is of value to anyone who has interest in Arabic and English discourse analysis and linguistics. It also offers insights to students of journalism.

In the first of the seven chapters, the author provides an overview of the research, particularly on the discourse notion of grounding, a feature of text as background or foreground. Grounding is viewed as a semantic property of discourse, distinct from coherence, which is a text property. The goal of the study reported in the book is accounting for grounding in short Arabic and English news items. In chapter 2, Khalil presents a model of text production and the discourse notion of foreground-background structure. He proceeds to discuss in a lucid fashion how information is semantically represented in discourse or, in other words, how meaning is organized. For this purpose, he distinguishes between two organizing principles of meaning, coherence and grounding. To him, on the one hand, coherence pertains to the organization of meaning “at the levels of generality and specificity” (p. 45), but it does not distinguish among propositions in terms of their grounding values. On the other hand, grounding organizes information according to its relevant importance in a text. In chapter 3, the author tries to account for how the content of a text is organized in schemata and shows which ones are typical of short news items. He discusses salience and prominence as two manifestations of grounding, the former being schematic and the latter syntactic. He also introduces the concept of staging as a grounding-signaling strategy.

In chapter 4, Khalil presents the reader with a detailed analysis of structures in English news items (e.g., adverbials) that occur in sentence-initial position whose function is to establish grounding. He concludes that such sentence-initial structures vary in the value of the background they assign. Some of them have a connecting function whereas others have a disconnecting function.

Chapter 5 examines the influence of sentence-initial Arabic markers on word order of the main clause and their grounding value. The author notes the grave consequences on the communication of meaning and the global structure of the text as a news item when these markers are absent, as in translated versions, for instance. Chapter 6 presents a detailed analysis of the Arabic markers discussed in chapter 5 from three perspectives: syntactic (word order), pragmatic (writer interpretation of the nature of the grounding value in relation to preceding propositions), and semantic (establishing relative
grounding value). He examines the relation between initial markers and levels of grounding values. Khalil concludes that these markers indicate both the importance and the relevance of the information communicated by the proposition. The final chapter is a discussion of the theoretical and applied issues presented and examined in preceding chapters. It contains concise summaries of each issue raised.

Although the book is well organized and the points are adequately discussed, the data seem to impose a limitation on the generalizability of findings. The sample news items are restricted to the *International Herald Tribune* and the international edition of the Egyptian newspaper *Al-Ahram*. Readers may want to know if similar news items from, say, American newspapers and other Arabic-language, non-Egyptian newspapers might exhibit deviations from the patterns observed in the study.

Another observation has to do with the manner in which Arabic texts are listed. Some are presented in transliteration followed by the literal translation and then the meaning in English. Other texts are presented using an odd method, in which the Arabic text is cited in English and the discourse markers are in Arabic transliteration (pp. 180–216). They should have been treated just like the English texts, cited in their entirety in Arabic script. On the same critical note, it would have been helpful if a list of acronyms had been appended to the study. Readers may confuse, for example, the first part of the acronym FG–BG (foreground-background) with FG for figure/ground. Nonetheless, these observations do not in any way detract from the value of this work and the significant contribution it makes to Arabic and English discourse analysis and linguistics.

MAHDI ALOSH
*The Ohio State University*

**BILINGUALISM**


The second volume in Blackwell’s Explaining Linguistics series, this interdisciplinary volume presents “a survey of current research in the area of language processing in the second language learner and bilingual” (p. xi). It brings together under the rubric of bilingualism the perspectives of well-established researchers and their collaborators whose work is rooted in the paradigms and research traditions of psychology, linguistics, second language acquisition, and education.

The volume consists of nine chapters: (1) “The Bilingual’s Language Modes” (Grosjean); (2) “The Voice Contrast in English and Spanish: The Relationship between Perception and Production” (Zampini & Green); (3) “The Development of Conceptual Representation for Words in a Second Language” (Kroll & Tokowicz); (4) “The Nature of the Bilingual Lexicon: Experiments with the Masked Priming Paradigm” (Forster & Jiang); (5) “Explaining Aspects of Code-Switching and Their Implications” (Myers-Scotton & Jake); (6) “Production of Verb Agreement in Monolingual, Bilingual and Second-Language Speakers” (Nicol, Teller, & Greth); (7) “A Theory of Syntactic Interference in the Bilingual” (Sanz & Bever); (8) “Sentence Parsing in Fluent Spanish-English Bilinguals” (Dussias); and (9) “Print as a Primary Source of English for Deaf Learners” (Supalla, Wix, & McKee).

In the opening chapter, Grosjean presents a discussion of the research methodological implications of “language mode,” which he defines as “the state of activation of the bilingual’s languages and language processing mechanisms at a given point in time” (p. 3). Supported by an analysis of the methods from several studies on bilinguals, he argues that researchers should screen participants carefully and take language mode into account when designing experiments or interpreting results. Several of the subsequent papers in the volume pick up on the language mode topic (e.g., 2, 3, 4, 8). Forster and Jiang (chapter 4), for example, argue for an independent method of verifying a participant’s language mode in order to test research hypotheses convincingly.

Chapters 2 through 4 focus on empirical studies in psycholinguistics that investigate theoretical issues in language processing from speech perception and production to the nature of representation in bilingual memory. Worthy of note in these papers is that the researchers have widened the scope of their investigations to include adult second language learners. In all of these chapters, the reader will find coherent reviews of relevant studies, clear framing of the research methodologies, and presentations of recent work by the researchers.
Chapters 5 through 8 take on questions of bilingualism from a linguist-psycholinguist’s perspectives and center primarily on issues of syntax and language production: code-switching, production of verb agreement, syntactic interference, and sentence parsing. Nicol et al.’s chapter on production of verb agreement and Dussias’s chapter on sentence parsing employ experimental procedures to test early bilingual subjects and second language learners and late bilinguals, respectively. The remaining papers by Myers-Scotton and Jake and by Sanz and Bever employ analysis of corpus data in support of their theories. As in the previous chapters, these papers collectively give the reader an excellent overview of the research areas. Readers new to the literature will especially appreciate Dussias’s concise and informative introduction, in which she frames the major thrusts in the research literature on bilingualism from the earliest times to present. Myers-Scotton and Jake’s impressive account of code-switching and the presentation of their 4-M model stands out for its detail, the extent of the argument, and elegant logic; however, readers who are not well versed in minimalist linguistic theory may find this paper challenging. Such readers would be advised first to read Sanz and Bever’s chapter, which provides in its introduction a helpful and reader-friendly framework.

The final chapter by Supalla, Wix, and McKee, which describes an innovative, research-based teaching program, addresses issues of bilingualism from a slightly different perspective, namely the practical problems of teaching reading and English to Deaf elementary school students. At first glance, one might wonder how this chapter fits with the volume. However, it provides a reminder that bi- or multilingualism extends beyond the conventional definition and also demonstrates the effective integration of research for improving educational practice.

In her introduction to this volume, Nicol states that the study of bilingual and multilingual speakers has “with a few notable exceptions, historically been the domain of language educators” (p. xi). Noting that theories of linguistic representation and processing in the fields of psychology and linguistics have been largely based on a study of the monolingual speaker, Nicol points out the advantages of studying bilingual and multilingual populations to shed light on issues such as storage and retrieval of words and concepts and to answer questions about shared representation and processing mechanisms. Such justifications might be surprising to language educators, whose research goals are different and generally not concerned with adding to our understanding of human cognition. It may also appear to imply that the volume has nothing to say to researchers in language education, an implication that could not be farther from the truth. The kind of inquiry that is represented here, and the collaborative research that is being done in places like the University of Arizona’s interdisciplinary Second Language Acquisition and Teaching (SLAT) program, from which many of the papers in this volume originated, provides a critical border-spanning function that will help to build a more seamless and coherent knowledge base about language learners, language learning, and the multilingual mind.

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FRENCH


Using French has clearly stood the test of time. As the subtitle suggests, the book provides exhaustive (and at times exhausting) lists of words: cognates, paronyms, synonyms, homonyms, antonyms, prepositions, idioms, negatives, interjections, fillers, compounds, conjunctions, and elliptical expressions. The word lovers among us will cherish this book. The language learners among us will review or discover the technicalities and intricacies that link grammar and vocabulary, liaison, numbers, plurals, names, moods, and tenses. One component that the book does not contain is a scholarly apparatus, which leaves the reader in the dark as to the sources of the language samples. The data seem reliable but questions of statistical validity do not enter into the analyses. The approach is one of contrastive analysis, primarily focused on parts of speech and word order in French and English.

One of the most rewarding and informative contributions of Using French is the sustained discussion of register and differences in surface features, ranging from informal (R1) to balanced
(R2) to formal (R3) language, either spoken or written. Should you want to check your own social register or polish your colloquial speech, you will find fascinating the discussion of word order with adverbs or various R1, R2, and R3 ways of asking questions. The authors provide the best summary I have ever encountered. From this material emerges a crucial pedagogical lesson for us all. The choices in register suggest that we often chas- tise students for saying things that are actually said in French but by R1 people, probably because we know R3 French and want to teach it, assuming that the errors of our students will not be understood when in fact they will be. Batchelor and Offord’s assessment may lead some of us to conclude that some of our pattern drills are useless for this reason. Their sustained discussion will enable instructors to situate themselves with ease and confidence.

The usefulness of the book is limited by the absence of attention to pronunciation. The review of mute *e* and liaison does help us to know what to teach in conversation and phonetics classes. And the list of homonyms will provide some fun for professors figuring how to use them in a class where the students already have a fairly advanced exposure to the language. To know the current term for a drug addict or transvestite, go to the section on truncation in R1 slang, or the lists of fillers and transitions.

Many of the lists provide useful resources for materials and themes in semitechnical translation or business courses, even role plays for language for special purposes or for the professions. The book is useful, for example, for translating historical and famous personal names, names of cities, and the like. The abbreviation section provides an up-to-date desk reference. If one chose to do a cultural unit on using the *petites annonces*, then that section would prove pedagogically useful because “penetrating the language of les petites annonces may be a bewildering task” (p. 163), given the esoteric expressions and strangled grammar. One list contains several hundred nouns whose gender native speakers are not even certain of.

The authors do not seem to keep a specific audience consistently in mind, which leads to three drawbacks. First, the authors claim to be meeting the needs of students, but at times this seems a bit of a stretch because benefiting from the book requires in places a level of language mastery more characteristic of faculty than students. Second, on occasion, the expressions used are clearly British, making the French equivalents easier to understand than the translations and examples in my native tongue. At other times the authors seem to be addressing the international English-speaking community. Finally, the authors claim to be descriptive, rather than prescriptive. Yet, early on we are warned about improving or downgrading speech by choices of grammar. Alternate grammatical patterns are labeled “carelessness” in varying from the standard, and non-liaison is called “laziness of articulation.” Web sites are putting this sort of data online. In the meantime, *Using French* is just what the doctor ordered, a desk reference for pros.

MICHAEL DANAHY
University of Mississippi


It would seem that another phonetics manual for French would be superfluous, but this treatment is substantially different from all others currently available. The author has sought depth rather than breadth and has succeeded admirably. His goal is to describe the articulation of French sounds and how they vary among native speakers because of linguistic environment and geographical and social factors. The articulation of the title is taken in its strictest sense as the formation of discrete sounds. Coveney does not deal with many features commonly discussed in phonetics, such as suprasegmentals (intonation, rhythm), rules for mute *e* retention, and liaison.

After a detailed introduction in which he discusses French pronunciation in general terms and describes his sources of data, Coveney analyzes consonants, then vowels. He relies heavily on research conducted at the Institut de Phonétique de Strasbourg using filmed X-rays reproduced as line drawings that appeared in a now out-of-print (1986) book. He discusses all known variations among native speakers based on geography, style, social class, age, gender, and other factors. He describes the frequency of French sounds in other languages and lists many of them. A potential source of disappointment for many readers is that he mentions variation only where French is a native language, thus excluding alleged second-language cultures, such as those of Africa and the United States. If readers
want to know about the phonemic status of a mid vowel in Bavarian dialects of German (p. 87) or that schwa exists in Panjabi (p. 91), then we would certainly profit from information on variation in francophone Africa and North America.

The most interesting and innovative part of the book occurs mainly, but not exclusively, in the last chapter, where Coveney discusses intersegmental variation. Within this topic, he includes not only all of the allophonic variation involved in the accents listed above but also the influences that sounds have on each other. We learn, for example, that initial /m/ of Monsieur can be devoiced and denasalized, giving a [p] sound or [psjø] (p. 154).

In fact, the details of articulation the author brings to his readers make an accurate summary of this book almost impossible. It is remarkably well researched (16 pages of bibliography) and referenced; he supports everything with specific citations, something often lacking in phonetics manuals, and explains disagreements among other phoneticians. Every sentence is so packed with information (e.g. /I/ is endolabial—contact with the inner surface of the lip—not exolabial, pp. 45–46) that the reader must stop to imitate each sound described before continuing. It makes for laborious but worthwhile reading.

Coveney’s approach brings up a weakness with this and many other phonetics books. Because the analyses proceed sound by sound, the variations produced by any one linguistic group are so scattered throughout the book that the reader loses track of how any one person might speak. Books such as this should recapitulate their content to describe each linguistic group, so that people are the focus of attention as well as sounds. The thorough index is helpful, but Que- bec French, for example, is described in 19 places throughout the book, making synthesis difficult.

The manual is not meant for the traditional corrective phonetics class because there are no exercises or accompanying tapes. The minute detail of the analysis and requisite knowledge of phonetics vocabulary would make teaching with this book difficult, and it is too advanced for American undergraduates. It would make excellent reading for graduate students in linguistics, and it is certainly required reading for all phonetics teachers because it will surely become the standard reference work in the field.

JOEL WALZ
University of Georgia


Also included are multimedia CD–ROM ($13.95) and video ($13.95), Handbook for Teaching French, Answer Key (free to adopters).

The seamless integration of culture, from the realia that opens each of the 20 chapters (here called “Leçons”), to the notes in the margins (Info +), to concluding with the documents in the “Découvertes culturelles,” gives this program its special note among the many good first-year French textbooks. Four “Magazines francophones” explore aspects of the French-speaking world in greater detail, and the accompanying interactive CD–ROM and 60-minute video provide further breadth as well as depth. In Voilà! culture is not an add-on but a natural part of the language-learning process. This well-conceived program just keeps getting better, with up-to-date material to spark interest such as opinion surveys, culturally rich realia, current photographs (mostly of people), and humorous drawings.

The attention paid to lexical development also sets Voilà! apart. Roughly half of each chapter is devoted to vocabulary learning, which seems appropriate to the needs of the beginner. Students are provided input through the authentic documents and accompanying activities in the opening spread. Then short readings, created by the authors, set the vocabulary in context, with drawings to assist comprehension. The “Notes de Vocabulaire” offer clarifications, presenting some forms initially as lexical items and then treating them as structures in subsequent chapters. Form-focused and communicative activities require students to produce the vocabulary before moving on to the study of structures. At the end of each chapter, the usual vocabulary lists are divided into “Vocabulaire de base,” expressions for production, and “Vocabulaire supplémentaire,” for recognition. Included in this latter group are subcategories of colloquial expressions, slang, and terms used in other French-speaking cultures. For those who want still more, the workbook includes optional vocabulary for each chapter. This is an impressive amount of vocabu-
lary, but instructors have the flexibility of assigning the lists that meet their goals and the interests of students. The vocabulary from each chapter is pronounced on the audio CD that accompanies the text, which is helpful for beginners. Because dialogues are not used in the program, students do not get many models of the patterns of spoken French, nor is there overt treatment of functions, such as how to introduce, invite, decline, or interrupt.

The grammatical structures are typical of current first-year textbooks, with care taken to select those most central to communication. Because students may have used many of the forms as lexical items, the grammatical presentations should appear natural to them. For example, *qui* is introduced as an interrogative and relative pronoun in the vocabulary notes of chapter 7; in chapter 12 *qui* (and *que*) are explained as relative pronouns, although *dont* is saved for the grammar appendix. Each chapter usually treats three forms with brief, straightforward explanations. When helpful, comparisons are made to English. It is not assumed that students understand grammatical terminology in English, which should ease the learning task and minimize the instructor’s need to explain. Communicative activities follow form-focused exercises after each structure. A recurring cast of characters, with defined personalities, who appear in the exercises as well as in the opening readings, should hold student interest. There are, however, no culminating activities in which students could apply all the structures of a particular chapter, so the grammar points tend to remain a bit isolated from each other. Instructors who enjoy using those more global activities, role-plays, dialogues to imitate, and the like will rarely find them in *Voilà!*

The usual ancillaries provide support for all of the elements in the textbook. The workbook follows the same organization, with vocabulary exercises and then grammar activities, most of which are form-focused and only loosely contextualized, although the complex guided writing assignment at the end of each chapters requires that students use all the elements of the chapter. Despite the discrete-point nature of the majority of the exercises, the answer key is not included in the workbook, but it is provided for instructors. An unusual activity in the workbook involves translation (“Thème et Version”), something rarely found in first-year programs today. These few sentences sensitize students to the differences between English and French. The laboratory program, of reasonable length, focuses equally on listening comprehension and pronunciation, introduces the phonetic alphabet in *leçon* 13 and avoids the use of dictation, often a standard in first-year programs.

For the instructor, the excellent *Handbook for Teaching French* includes not only lesson plans and a wealth of supporting information, both linguistic and cultural, for each chapter, but also activities for the use of the video and its script, the audio script for the lab, notes for maps, and a bibliography for language teaching. The margin notes in the textbook suggest expansion techniques for many of the exercises. Thanks to these resources the program is very “instructor friendly.”

Digital ancillaries provide yet more material for the eager student. The games on the CD–ROM are entertaining and easy to navigate, and they have good sound quality and simple graphics. They become a bit repetitive, although the use of maps, which are completed as correct answers are given, is a clever way to reinforce geographic knowledge. Quizzes, which include excerpts from the video for listening comprehension, interactive vocabulary exercises, and cultural expansion activities for the Internet are found on the *Voilà!* Web site.

*Voilà!* is an excellent choice for programs in which culture and vocabulary building are considered as important as mastery of structures. The amount of material is manageable, activities are carefully controlled, support for students and instructors is impressively rich, and the components complement each other well. This is an attractive, intelligently-developed package.

**HANNELORE JARAUSCH**  
*University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill*  

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Designed for high intermediate and advanced students of French, this textbook contains 10 chapters, each organized around a central theme. Each chapter, which consists of three étapes, begins with an interview from the CD–ROM, from which students obtain many of
the vocabulary items and structures pertinent to the chapter’s topic. The first étape offers a series of interactive exercises on the vocabulary and structures presented in the interview and a short lexical base offered at the beginning of the chapter. More relevant vocabulary is presented throughout the remainder of the chapter. Students are also asked to personalize their vocabulary lists at the end of each chapter. A short test (survey, self-test, quiz) precedes the final exercises of the étape. The second étape follows a similar format (the short test is eliminated) and seeks to deepen vocabulary development on the theme. The final étape is based on reading materials, pre- and postreading activities and discussion topics.

The primary goal of this textbook is to improve oral production skills. The exercises alternate between interactive texts (surveys, trivia quizzes, realia) and such activities as role plays and debates. Students are given useful tools for conversational management such as expressions allowing them to initiate and terminate discussions, change topics, and take turns in conversations. Additional goals of the textbook are to improve aural comprehension, vocabulary acquisition and development, and knowledge of content area through readings and realia. Each of these goals is addressed in every chapter, some more effectively than others.

The exercises, for example, are generally stimulating and fun. Many are designed to allow students to express personal opinions on topics of popular interest: career choices, finding life partners, causes of stress, and so forth. Other exercises, generally those in the final étapes, require discussion at a higher linguistic level. Some examples include discussions on why we have nightmares and what they may mean, what our national or cultural identity is and how we know it, how Barbie shapes femininity, and whether we eventually will be able to teleport ourselves à la Star Trek. These topics are appropriately challenging for advanced students but may be frustrating for those students in the intermediate range. The ability to hypothesize, develop, and maintain arguments is a high-level skill, and a student’s participation may be further impeded by a lack of relevant vocabulary. These lexical gaps are especially problematic because students are asked to prepare personalized lexicons for each chapter. Self-generated vocabulary is, in theory, an admirable tenet of a student-centered learning philosophy, but this reviewer’s experience forecasts bleak days in the classroom sorting through hastily-researched expressions and words inappropriate for the context at hand. I would prefer larger lexical lists to be given in preparation for the readings and discussions that follow so that all students could spend more time on the content of their response instead of looking up words in the dictionary.

The interviews on the CD–ROM are clear and informative and offer useful vocabulary. Students are asked to listen carefully for vocabulary items and expressions that will help them in the subsequent étapes. However, the predominant use of tu over vous between the interlocutors may be confusing; the interviewees’ ages and professions are often given but their relationships with the interviewer are not. Because the first chapter is dedicated to the art of conversation and includes exercises on the appropriate use of linguistic register, it would seem appropriate that the subsequent conversations take this into account.

Entretiens is, overall, a thoughtful and well-conceived textbook. It is a welcome contribution to textbooks devoted to advanced conversational practice. The Instructor’s Resource Manual is especially noteworthy. It contains testing rubrics, materials, answer keys, tapescripts, and useful pointers concerning the implementation of the exercises for each chapter.

ELLA KIRK
Hiram College


Sur le Vif is intended for use in a 1-semester college-level intermediate French course. Using a primarily communicative approach, it combines practical vocabulary, a grammar review, readings, and conversational exercises (activités d’expansion) that allow for open-ended practice of terms and structures learned in each chapter. The Sur le Vif program consists of the textbook, combined workbook and lab manual, audio CDs, computerized text bank, and instructor’s resource manual.
Reviews

The last two items are free to adopters, as is the instructor’s annotated version of the text. Although there is, unfortunately, no video specifically designed for the program, the authors have provided suggestions for video and film excerpts that can be used with each chapter. The program also includes a Web site with exercises and activities for students, as well as suggestions for instructors.

The textbook itself is divided into two main parts: a series of nine theme-based lessons intended for in-class use, and a grammar reference section, designed for out-of-class preparation. Also included in the first part are a prelude, two interludes, and a postlude built around songs. The grammar reference section and the lessons are carefully coordinated so that throughout each chapter, students are referred to the grammar section and are told to review certain structures before proceeding. The grammar points are reinforced through a limited number of exercises in the textbook and through more extensive practice in the workbook/lab manual.

Each chapter of the text follows the same five-part arrangement: (a) an extensive theme-related vocabulary list followed by exercises, (b) a reading, (c) grammar exercises, (d) a second reading, and (e) conversational exercises. The chapter themes themselves, with the exception of chapter 1 (“Les études”), reproduce the themes of the second edition and deal with such topics as the family, young people, travel, the media, and the future. The vocabulary, although at times somewhat daunting by its length, is reinforced by well-designed exercises of both the mechanical and the more creative, open-ended variety. Most of the chapter readings are new to the third edition, reflecting the authors’ desire to update the cultural content. In certain chapters, a song replaces one of the two readings, but in all cases the songs and readings are well chosen and are closely related to the chapter theme. The authors have endeavored to strike a balance between literary and nonliterary selections, drawing on the works of such writers as Camus, Le Clézio and Perec, as well as the monthly magazine Phosphore. Cultural content is provided not just by readings, however, as each chapter has numerous margin notes (Saviez-vous que . . . ?) which provide the student and the instructor with interesting facts about France and the French.

If Sur le Vif has a weakness, it is, in my opinion, the way in which the authors have chosen to deal with grammar. Grammar explanations, given in English, are found in the second half of the textbook. Each chapter contains notes to the students, reminding them to review a particular structure before proceeding further. Obviously, this method demands a great deal of independent, out-of-class preparation by students. Although the grammar explanations are clear and concise, I fear that the authors may be too optimistic in their expectations of what students have learned and remembered from first-year French. The authors may not have found the right balance between grammar review and conversational exercises and readings. A good example is the presentation of the passé composé/imparfait distinction in chapter 3. Students are referred to the grammar section for the formation of these two tenses but are then referred to an appendix for the formation of the past participle of all but regular verbs. The verbs themselves are arranged alphabetically, so that students cannot find a single list of the most common irregular past participles. The exercises in the textbook are limited in number but perhaps too full of material, requiring the use of the passé composé, the imparfait, the past infinitive and the new verb manquer (à). Chapter 3 also presents the plus-que-parfait, although this tense is not dealt with in the textbook. A further difficulty arises from the fact that the syllabus suggested by the authors is overly ambitious. They assume, for example, that chapter 3 (vocabulary exercises, two readings, grammar, and conversational exercises) can be completed in 3 days. Instructors adopting this text will find themselves forced to eliminate parts of each chapter or an entire chapter if they wish to cover all the material in 1 semester.

These problems, however, do not alter the fact that the new edition of Sur le Vif can play an important role in a college-level French program. Although the difficulty level of the readings, vocabulary exercises, and conversational exercises is appropriate for a second-year course, these materials are interesting and open-ended enough that they could very profitably be adapted to an introductory conversation class. Although some instructors will want to make adjustments to the syllabus to allow more time for grammar explanations and exercises, the textbook and ancillaries provide the motivated student all the tools needed to continue in advanced language, literature, and culture courses. I am happy to recommend this updated program.

GEORGE J. MCCOOL
Towson University
The mark of a good scholar is the ability to apply broad theoretical concepts to new realities and, in so doing, recreate and generate new theories. This is precisely what Clare Mar-Molinero does so well in this important book that puts the Spanish-speaking world on the sociolinguistic literature map by making it accessible in English and expanding its theoretical framework. Rather than reduce a complex multilingual, multicultural, and multiethnic world to simple principles, Mar-Molinero engages readers in critical inquiry of language in the Spanish-speaking world.

Although this book focuses on the politics of language in the development of national systems, Mar-Molinero is not drawn into the conflict and antagonism that have defined nation-building in the Spanish-speaking world. She treats the subject with accuracy and objective detachment, although her point of view on the linguistic rights of Latin America’s indigenous minorities looms large in the discussion.

This is a serious book—well documented, written with scholarly precision, yet mindful of novice readers. Mar-Molinero’s approach to the politics of language is multidisciplinary, drawing from history, sociology, anthropology, and even literature. Because of the richness of facts and detail, this book is of interest to sociolinguistic scholars familiar with the Spanish-speaking world and also to those who are not. In addition, because of the multidisciplinary nature of its sources, this book can be used by students who wish to learn more about sociology of language within the context of the Spanish-speaking world.

The attention to the plurality of the societies in the Spanish-speaking world makes this book significant. In fact, it is not about the Spanish-speaking world but rather about the multilingual worlds of Spain and Latin America. Both Latin America and Spain are given thorough treatment, with Spain receiving prominence given its role as “madre patria.” Within these worlds, majority Spanish-speaking contexts and minority stateless nations receive equal treatment. Powerful groups such as the Catalonians, as well as the poor indigenous communities of Latin America, are included in these pages. Mar-Molinero expands on the sense of “pluricentric” language given by Clyne (1992), because she presents not only a language (Spanish) with several interacting centers but interacting centers with many languages, in particular Spanish, Catalan, Basque, Galician, Nahuatl, Quechua, Aymara, Guaraní, and the many other indigenous languages of Latin America.

The first three parts of the book cover three important topics central to sociology of language: language and nationalism, language policies and planning, and language and education. The concluding part speculates on the future of Spanish, while looking at Spanish in the United States and in its global context. The first three parts open with theoretical frameworks, followed by chapters that describe with detail and rich examples the Spanish-speaking context.

Not all parts of the book are equally satisfying. The third part bravely attempts to attend to the role of education in the formation of national identity and language planning and, in doing so, to link the first two parts. Given that many sociolinguists are only vaguely familiar with the intricacies of classrooms and schools, part 3 fails to provide the same richness of detail and data that drive parts 1 and 2. It then fails to question the appropriateness of applying to the Spanish-speaking world, without benefit of Spanish language data, theoretical frameworks that have often been grounded in data from the English-speaking world. Although part 3 outlines in coherent and important ways educational language policy in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, Catalonia, the Basque Country, and Galicia, it offers little description of how these policies are implemented in schools. In fact, the chapter on Latin American educational policies draws examples only from adult literacy programs, a context that, although important, leaves out the central aspect of the educational system, that is, educating children in elementary and secondary schools.

Those of us interested in Spanish in the United States also note the absence of treatment of Mexican-Americans, the largest Spanish-speaking group in the country. Instead, Mar-Molinero chooses to describe the sociolinguistic situation of Puerto Ricans.

This is an important book. Its main shortcoming, and perhaps its stroke of genius, may be the author’s failure to reflect in its title the complex multilingual world that she portrays. The content of the book attempts to give fair treatment to all sociolinguistic situations where Spanish is either an official language or the home of a sizable speech community. In doing so, however, it gives voice to other languages and speech communities. But the book never addresses head-on the
conflict between the imagined Spanish-speaking community the author wishes to define initially and the multilingual community that emerges from its pages. This is a case in which the content of the book seems to have gone beyond the parameters set out by the author. Despite the author’s delineation of a Spanish-speaking world, readers construct and gain deep understanding of the multilingual world that makes up what is, in name only, a Spanish-speaking world.

OFELIA GARCIA
Teachers College, Columbia University

LATIN


Like many current texts in Greek and Latin, Sharpley’s Essential Latin aims to combine language learning with an introduction to the culture of the target language and to move students into reading authentic texts as soon as possible. The methodology involves providing simultaneous reading vocabulary that exceeds the vocabulary a student is expected to have mastered by the time of the reading. At the same time, grammar and vocabulary are introduced in modest systematic doses supported by exercises.

Sharpley’s book follows this formula with variations. He clusters the readings in each chapter around an aspect of Roman history or culture. The themes proceed in a generally chronological order, beginning with Early Rome, continuing through Rome’s encounters with Carthage and Greece to the Republic (Cicero) and Empire (Augustus), and then, after sections on the family, society, women, education, and leisure, ending with Roman Britain and Christianity. Rather, however, than offering connected prose of gradually increasing difficulty and authenticity, Sharpley uses unmodified Latin texts from the outset, incorporating 8 to 21 brief thematically-related passages from ancient authors in each chapter. An introduction in English provides context for the quotations, and vocabulary accompanies each one. Each chapter also introduces some aspect of morphology or syntax, practice, vocabulary to be memorized, and exercises.

In his introduction, Sharpley acknowledges the shortcomings of his method, in which students inevitably encounter syntax as well as vocabulary to which they have not yet been introduced. He expresses confidence that students will be able to navigate with the help of the accompanying vocabulary and the complete translations at the back of the book and that the advantages of grappling with original literature outweigh the difficulties.

If the challenge of using unadapted Latin from the outset were the only shortcoming in the book, one might recommend it with some enthusiasm. The thematic organization of readings provides a coherent overview of Roman culture, and the texts include many of the most famous passages in Latin, from Virgil’s tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento to passages from Pliny’s letters from Bithynia consulting the emperor Trajan on how to deal with the Christians denounced to him by informers.

Unfortunately, the presentation of the elements of Latin itself is inadequate. The explanation of grammar is minimal and avoids the standard syntactical terminology; offered instead is an impressionistic glance at the language rather than a firm foundation in it. Often students are simply referred to paradigms in the back of the book. These, too, are unconventional: Although the nominative-accusative-genitive-dative-ablative order of the cases has become standard, Sharpley’s numbering of verb forms from 1 to 6 obscures the identification of the forms with persons of the verb, and therefore with pronominal subjects. Perhaps the most inadequate presentation of grammar is the introduction of the subjunctive in chapter 8. The subjunctive is contrasted with the indicative as expressing potential action rather than actual occurrence and 10 different syntactical uses are listed and illustrated, all with forms of the present subjunctive. In the practice that follows, two of the four items contain an imperfect or irregular subjunctive, but there is no presentation or even acknowledgment of the existence of different tenses of the subjunctive or of the principle of sequence of tenses. A pervasive problem is that the use of original texts in all their variety precludes the systematic reinforcement of learning vocabulary in the readings, nor are the relatively brief exercises carefully keyed to new vocabulary.

The mix of components of the text does not point to any clear target audience. The author asserts that the book “is intended both for individuals who wish to discover (or rediscover) Latin, and for colleges and universities in need of material for short courses” (p. vii). The inclusion of keys to the exercises and translations of all of the Latin would seem to serve the needs of the first group, indi-
The strengths of this book are perhaps best seen in contrast with similar texts, such as Yule’s Pragmatics (1996) and Levinson’s Pragmatics (1983). Yule’s book, part of the Oxford Introduction to Language Study series, devotes 90 pages to introducing the material. The rest of the book contains

Jacob Mey, Professor Emeritus of Linguistics at the University of Southern Denmark, co-founded the well-respected Journal of Pragmatics, of which he is the chief editor. This text, a survey and description of the field of pragmatics, first appeared in 1993. This second edition, greatly expanded, contains four new chapters in the field of macropragmatics and includes such valuable chapter topics as “Literary Pragmatics,” “Pragmatics across Cultures” and “Social Aspects of Pragmatics.” This last chapter deals with issues familiar to language teachers, the use of politeness and the use of language in the social struggle, including gender issues. At the end of the book are 60 pages of notes, references to works in the field, and an index.

As the title of the book suggests, this text is designed to introduce students to the field of pragmatics, including its many subfields. The breadth of this attempt is reflected such chapters as “Context, Implicature, and Reference,” “Pragmatic Principles,” “Speech Acts,” and “Conversational Analysis,” in addition to the completely new chapters mentioned above.

In the preface to the second edition, the author claims that “roughly half of the book is entirely new, while the rest has been thoroughly revised; not a sentence or paragraph has been spared” (p. x). It seems that the revisions have been designed to match the needs of students new to the field of pragmatics. The chapters have been rewritten in a conversational style designed to make the issues accessible to the widest range of interested persons. Within each chapter, an introductory paragraph poses elementary questions of definition, for example, “What is an implicature?” It is worth noting that the author often uses quotations from North American speech and media, so that U.S. readers can easily identify their source. North American students may not be familiar with the lively British study of pragmatics, reported in such publications as Journal of Pragmatics, but Mey’s use of familiar speech samples from North America shows his willingness to attract readers from the New World.

At the end of each chapter is a “Review and Discussion” section in which sample cases are introduced, and questions about the cases are posed. The intention of the author is not to test students for the right answers but, instead, to encourage them to engage in discussion concerning the material. For that reason, the reader may find that these questions are comparatively long-winded, each one taking up the better part of a page of the text. The answers to the questions are not to be found in the text but rather are designed to emerge from the discussion. Thus, if students were to study pragmatics from this text alone, they might find themselves struggling to know if they have arrived at the right answers to the questions.
brief passages from other writers, used as the basis for problems and discussion. But with such a brief space for introduction, the book is little more than a list of the topics one might study in the field of pragmatics. The Levinson book is more readable, stretching to 420 pages including indexes, but many issues have emerged since its publication. The Mey book offers a more accessible discussion of a new and often challenging field of linguistics.

I do have some reservations about Mey’s text, though. It is designed for students of linguistics and language, not for the casual reader. Although the writer has made great efforts not to be overly technical, the questions he deals with imply that readers have more than a casual familiarity with the study of language and linguistics. There are references to trends in linguistics, such as the theories of such people as Noam Chomsky, H. P. Grice, and J. L. Austin, as well as to the history of linguistic inquiry over the past 20 years. A first-time student of language may feel lost among references with which the writer assumes the reader is familiar.

Unfortunately, it is those issues of most practical relevance to language learners—politeness strategies, speech acts across cultures, gender issues in conversation—that receive only brief attention and mainly in the last two chapters of the book. Those of us engaged in teacher training may want to consult Rose and Kasper’s Pragmatics in Language Teaching (2001) for extended treatment of these topics.

In summary, I recommend this text as a readable, accurate, and engaging introduction to the field of pragmatics for students of linguistics and language. I reserve my judgment about its usefulness for language teachers.

JAMES J. KOHN
San Francisco State University


Ralph Penny has long been a major figure in Hispanic historical grammar and dialectology, and this volume is his effort to bring the insights of socially-oriented variationist theories, prominent in contemporary sociolinguistics, to bear on the traditionally philological concerns of his field. To motivate this shift, he shows how traditional approaches are undertheorized, prone to oversimplification, and deficient in explanatory power. Variationist theory can provide, he reasonably proposes, increased understanding of diachronic processes and the resulting synchronic linguistic variation in the Iberian peninsula, Latin America, and the Sephardic diaspora.

For instance, in the first two chapters, Penny demonstrates that language variation is universal and that related varieties often blend seamlessly into their neighbors, making it impossible to delimit any single variety linguistically. Consequently, commonplace notions such as a dialect or a language and more technical constructs that depend on them, such as tree models of language families, are deeply flawed. None of this will come as news to those familiar with contemporary linguistics; however, the use of examples from Iberian Romance appears designed to make the point clear to those working primarily in that area.

In chapter 3, Penny proposes two socially-based mechanisms to explain language change. The first is accommodation, the tendency of speakers to approximate the forms used by their interlocutors. In situations where speakers of multiple varieties live together, the variants that predominate tend to be simpler and more regular. The resulting simplification and leveling are crucial because in the peninsula during the reconquest and later in America, speakers of different dialects constantly mixed in newly acquired territory. Furthermore, following Milroy and Milroy (1985), Penny shows how language changes more rapidly within large social networks with relatively loose relations than in smaller ones with stable intense relations. These loose social networks, he observes, were also characteristic of medieval Spain and early colonial Latin America.

This theoretical component is followed by a remarkable examination of actual forms and proposed mechanisms that explain their emergence in Galician-Portuguese, Spanish, and Catalan (chapter 4), American Spanish (chapter 5), and Judeo-Spanish (chapter 6). These chapters showcase Penny’s 3 decades of work on Iberian historical linguistics and his extraordinary range of scholarship in that field. They provide an elegant, accessible, and concise overview of some main features of Iberian Romance together with an examination of the proposed mechanisms to explain their origins. The final chapter consists of a short look at the history and effects of standardization.

Despite the impressive scope of this work, however, a fundamental theoretical hurdle is left unaddressed. The philological orientation is largely concerned with the study of language as an end in itself or, at maximum, to illuminate texts. Yet
variationist studies integrate language patterns in an overall social theory, much as formal linguistic research understands them as part of human cognition. Therefore, whereas traditional dialect studies look at contemporary variation to find previous patterns, variationists study language change as a social process. The difference can be appreciated in research methods. Whereas traditional dialect surveys gather evidence for geographic variation from elderly informants in rural districts to get as close as possible to archaic forms, variationists are not so empirically limited. Depending on their questions, they may examine rapidly changing varieties, do fieldwork in cities, use young informants, and consider a wide array of social factors, including ethnicity, subculture, class, age, and gender. Yet even in variationist studies dealing with moribund, rural, geographically-defined varieties, issues of social identity form the heart of the story. Similarly, when variationists examine diachronic matters, as in the controversy over the origins of African-American English, they concentrate on issues of community and social relations over and above simple description and classification.

Therefore, to apply a variationist model, it is not enough to deconstruct notions like dialect or language and advise caution in their use. It is necessary to replace them as, for instance, Labov (1966) does through conceiving of speech communities as being constituted by shared norms rather than shared linguistic features. This paradigm shift means that although variationists do account for language change in terms of accommodation and leveling, they are not limited to such relatively automatic mechanisms. They also consider a gamut of socially-motivated choices speakers make, such as in identity construction as motivations.

Such forces are clearly operating now in the Iberian Peninsula and Latin America, affecting language variation as they always have. Pujolar (2000), for example, examines members of second generation Spanish-speaking migrants in Barcelona who are now reaching maturity. He notes how their varying social ideologies realized as orientations towards gender, nation, youth subculture, and politics support differing linguistic patterns. These patterns include not only the choice between Catalan and Spanish but also the forms of Catalan and Spanish used and the situations in which they are used.

Similarly, fuller applications of variationist principles to historical grammar could elucidate a number of puzzles that Penny touches on but does not explore. One puzzle is the disappearance of Mozarabic (the Romance language used in Islamic Spain) in favor of Catalan, Spanish, and Portuguese. Leveling cannot on its own explain why these southern varieties and virtually all their features quickly vanished after reconquest. Variationists would assume that the autochthonous youths growing up in recently reconquered regions systematically abandoned the speech of their parents in favor of that of the newcomers, but why? Another puzzle is the adoption of Castilian in Aragon even before the integration of that medieval kingdom into the Spanish monarchy. Why did an Aragonese variety or even Catalan (given that Barcelona was the major commercial center of the kingdom) not come to predominate?

In the end, the adoption of variationist approaches means more than the addition of a few heuristic tools. It moves dialectological research towards sociolinguistic and even sociological paradigms and away from the roots of philology in the humanities. That is a step that the author of this volume seems reluctant to take.

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SPANISH


Palabra abierta is a new advanced-level composition text designed for a year-long reading, writing, and conversation course for both native and nonnative speakers. Written entirely in Spanish, the level is markedly higher than the typical third-year text, and it omits basic grammar reviews and exercises. The text is divided into seven thematic chapters focusing on cultural issues: human relations and love, the family, society, women in society, magic realism, Chicanos and border identity, and Latina immigrant identity. Stressing the importance of reading, the authors include 20 authentic, unabridged lecturas, ranging from a celebrity profile and op-ed pieces to short stories, poems, and academic essays. Although weighted toward Latinos in the United States, the readings
also cover the Peninsula and Latin America, presenting a range of perspectives to stimulate critical thinking and in-class discussion. The second half of each chapter, “Escritura,” requires students to produce a formal essay in a variety of prose styles, starting with a journalistic report and culminating in an academic research essay on a literary or cultural topic.

Palabra abierta’s approach to revision is the best of all the Spanish composition texts I have seen. The authors break the writing process into carefully articulated steps, including prewriting brainstorming, research, analysis, and outlining; three stages of revision, including self- and peer-evaluations, with specific questions to guide evaluation at each stage; and a postpublication reflection on the writing process. This approach is ideal for instructors who use portfolios or writing journals. Palabra abierta’s second greatest strength is its selection of readings, including timely and provocative articles that should spark productive discussions and help students develop interesting topics in their essays. I especially like the choice of literary texts, including one of my favorite stories, “La santa,” by Gabriel García Márquez. In the preface, the authors suggest thematically-appropriate films to supplement the readings. The cultural coverage is a vast improvement over most composition texts.

Unfortunately, I find some serious problems with Palabra abierta. The language used is too difficult for most nonnative speakers starting their fifth semester of college-level Spanish study. The explanatory readings, especially the “Gramática funcional” sections that address effective prose style, read like lectures overloaded with rhetorical terminology. The readings include few glosses, and many of the prereading thematic exercises pose general questions without providing either a model to guide students through the exercise or vocabulary to help them express key concepts. The authors should have invested more time in designing a variety of exercises to suit different learning styles and engage student interest. The “Gramática funcional” exercises usually ask students to review the readings in order to focus on grammatical structure and writing techniques, a boring and, I feel, ineffective activity. The writing activities are much better designed; however, the postpublication reflection questions are repeated almost verbatim in every chapter, even in the final one, so students are not asked to do progressively more thorough reviews of their work. The textbook is visually uninteresting, with few pictures and poor layout and pagination, and it lacks a glossary, a usage reference, and a guide to documentation. The CD–ROM, which simply reproduces the “Creando nuevos textos” section of each chapter, is useless. Finally, although I found few mistakes (most frequently agreement errors), the endnote symbols in the text of “La voz urgente” by Manuel Martín-Rodríguez (pp. 224–235) are missing, destroying what could have been a model of effective notation. This error is especially serious because there is no other example of good notation among the readings, although students are told to use correct documentation in their essays.

In sum, I admire the authors’ approach to the writing process, their emphasis on reading, and their cultural coverage; however, Palabra abierta’s weaknesses almost outweigh its real strengths. Although the authors in the preface emphasize the flexibility of their approach, instructors would find it difficult to adapt the text to a semester-long course without simply omitting entire chapters. This text could work well in a fourth-year or honors composition course, in which students are less likely to be discouraged by the difficulty of the language; it would work best for native speakers in their second year (or higher) of Spanish study. I do not find it appropriate for most third-year bridge courses.

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Some learners like to define structure first, learn it thoroughly, and then apply it. Others want
above all to communicate and will pick up structure and vocabulary along the way as needed. Jarvis, Lebredo, and Mena-Ayllón's *Basic Spanish Grammar* series is designed for the first approach. Students and teachers can use the series to work communicatively, but the primary emphasis is on structure. Designed for working professionals or students preparing for professional service careers, these introductory materials form a painstakingly coordinated package beginning with the basic grammar book, and adding a conversation manual and phrasebook, audio tapes or audio CDs, and audioscript for each of the following professions: law enforcement, business and finance, medical personnel, social services, and teachers. The chapters of the grammar book and the conversation manuals, including the general conversational manual, *Getting Along in Spanish*, work together.

The grammar book presents three to five points of grammar per chapter, defined and presented in paradigms, and followed by brief exercises. The instructor's edition includes an answer key. A computerized test bank and printed test and transparency series are also available. After every five lessons there is a review section. The conversation manuals begin with a model dialogue, followed by occupation-specific vocabulary and cultural notes focused on Hispanics in the United States. Next are presented conversation exercises and grammar exercises using the occupational vocabulary. After every fifth lesson, there is a short reading passage and a review chapter. The reading is also on the audio recording. The audiocassettes or CDs give pronunciation, dialogue, and vocabulary practice, as well as further structure exercises.

The materials are designed for beginning levels and, with 20 lessons each, can be used either for an intensive 1-semester program or a less intensive 1-year program. They cover all of the major features of Spanish grammar typical of a first-year course or course series, beginning with greetings, numbers and colors, and then to gender and number in nouns. They move on to all of the tenses, aspects, and moods of the verbs; then the standard collection of high-frequency irregular verbs are presented, as are reflexives, prepositions, interrogative and imperative sentences, and so forth.

The great strength of the series is its breadth: six conversation manuals, one general and five occupational, each coordinated with the basic grammar and accompanied by tapes and a phrasebook. It is a minor inconvenience that keeping up with revisions of all these materials has not been uniform. The current editions of the conversation career manuals range from fourth to sixth. This could make it somewhat difficult to ensure that a class is using the most up-to-date editions.

Centered on the grammar text, the overall approach of the series is grammar driven in an age when grammatical considerations are generally secondary to communicative priorities. This could be a positive contribution, filling a gap in the range of available approaches; however, the grammatical framework falls short. The patterns and paradigms are fine, but the grammatical categories themselves are inaccurate, beginning with nouns (called *nombres* in the conversation manuals, a term that in Spanish refers to both nouns (*sustantivos*) and adjectives). *Basic Spanish Grammar* does not distinguish tense, mood, and aspect of verbs, but rather uses such inaccurate terms as "conditional tense" (*Lección 15*, p. 223) and leaves preterit and imperfect undefined. Such a presentation will lead to problems when students continue to other grammar books and textbooks.

The emphasis of the conversation manuals is to provide additional focused vocabulary, rather than to foster and practice conversational strategies. Practice consists of comprehension vocabulary on the dialogue, then a series of fixed questions to ask a classmate, translation of dialogues from English into Spanish, a fill-in-the-blank one-sided dialogue and, finally, at the end of the chapter, a few open-ended conversations based on situations or cases. In these exercises, only one role is defined, giving the class partner no motivation to work from. For example, an exercise in unit 10 of *Spanish for Social Services* has the student ask a client about English classes and encourage him or her to continue improving his or her English. If the client agrees, there is no further conversation; but what if the client replies that she or he does not want to continue in the class and gives reasons to discontinue? The comprehension and classmate questions are all substantive; no opinions, disagreements, or interpretations are elicited or anticipated in the instructions.

The conversation exercises are interspersed with vocabulary and structure exercises. In general, students are taught to state and inquire about specific factual information and to use and understand job-related vocabulary. They are not taught about realistic communication, such as what conversational repair strategies can be used when the student does not understand what is said but must still reach understanding and continue to work.

There is no emphasis on authentic text and audio, that is, the kind of writing and speaking that native speakers use with fellow native speakers. As a result, even the vocabulary is limited. For instance, although the medical phrasebooks contain
casual and more polite terms for body parts, the authors do not distinguish their appropriate use. Colloquial terms are labeled as such, but no slang terms are offered, although they may the only terms that some patients or clients know and use. Student comprehension is not challenged. The audiotaped conversations are dramatized but are carefully pronounced by educated speakers. There is no crying, yelling, intruding background noise, or other kinds of complications that affect real comprehension and communication.

The readings in the conversation manuals are relevant and practical but also represent missed opportunities both for authentic text and for developing real conversation. For example, Lectura 2 following unit 10 in Spanish for Social Services is ostensibly an instruction page from the New York State Department of Social Services. The instructions refer to a form DSS–2921–S NYC and three brochures. If the form and brochures were included in an exercise packet, students could practice helping a client fill out the form and explaining the brochures, answering questions, and so forth. Class instructors are strongly advised to gather and utilize forms, brochures, and manuals to create real work-related conversation opportunities.

Overall, students will come away from these materials with essential structure and vocabulary but not the social and communicative skills to perform satisfactorily in the various professions. Perhaps the authors have proposed that as a reasonable goal for a beginning level. Although the series may form a basis for courses for working professionals, classes could and should supplement with ongoing language learning strategies, authentic text and sound, and open-ended exercises to stimulate more complicated conversation. No matter how extensive the materials in the series, they are still only a starting point, requiring the imagination and preparation of a teacher geared toward the relevant professions.

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Hispanomundo: Latinoamérica is designed to teach contemporary Latin American culture at the intermediate level and is meant to provide a basis for classroom discussion and writing assignments centered on Latin American culture. Physically, it is divided into eight chapters that cover a variety of periods and themes: (a) the pre-Columbian era to colonial times; (b) the struggle for independence up to the present day; (c) an attempt to define Hispanics; (d) the family and role of women in Latin America; (e) religion, education, government, politics and economy; and (f) a final chapter on current themes that includes everything from the Internet, television, music, and the environment to Puerto Rico, immigration, and influence of the United States in the Hispanic world. Each chapter is subdivided into a reading that presents the main topic followed by a presentation of excerpts from contemporary literature related to the chapter’s theme. Each of these subsections is succeeded by questions designed to focus student attention on the salient points of the reading. Next is a list of suggested topics to stimulate conversation and guide composition writing. Some chapters include a list of terms to be defined by the student. Front material comprises political maps of Mexico, the Caribbean, Latin America and Spain, the entire world, and a map of the United States that indicates the Spanish-speaking population in each state.

On the one hand, the end-of-reading activities are typical of traditional cultural readers and help students focus attention on the topics, ideas, issues, and themes deemed most important by the author. On the other hand, they lack the spark of creativity new common with intermediate-level readers, be they cultural or literary in focus. Creative teachers, however, will be able to provide prereading activities to stimulate student interest, refresh or introduce important vocabulary, and establish schemata prior to assigning the readings. The author-supplied questions could then be used as postreading catalysts for analysis, discussion, writing, and review activities.

It is appropriate to point out that the readings that open each section, apparently written by the author herself, would generally be understood by students in their third or fourth year of university study who had acquired the linguistic skills and lexicon necessary to handle upper-division courses taught in Spanish. Most of the readings that constitute the second portion of each chapter, however, are taken from the literature of respected Latin American authors and, therefore, contain the low-frequency lexical items, colloquialisms, regionalisms, and constructions that make such literature interesting to native readers yet difficult for typical second language learners. In
addition, intermediate-level readers frequently lack the necessary schemata for thorough comprehension of some topics. The author has taken some steps to aid learners by adding glosses to the authentic passages and has provided an extensive end-of-book glossary. Additional prereading activities would make these readings more accessible to the intermediate-level students for whom the book is intended.

A minor omission, yet one that would have provided additional pedagogical material, is the lack of captions for the photographs included in the text. Some photos simply illustrate the chapters’ central themes, whereas others need captions to be of any use at all. For example, in the section on music, a photo is provided of two of the musicians mentioned in the text, but because neither is identified, students are left to guess their identity or ignore the photo altogether. In a cultural text, this oversight is especially regrettable, because cultural referents even for common items are often disparate, and it is through visual images that students learn to identify the referents with the corresponding culture.

The glossary provides students with an important tool for accessing meaning quickly while completing assigned readings. Typical of most glossaries, some words that need to be included are missing, whereas other high-frequency words have been included. For example, the following words, which all appear within the introduction and first lines of a reading by Luis Zalamea, are neither glossed in the text nor found in the glossary: socarronería “sarcasm”; fiestero “fun-loving”; yorubas, bantúes, dagomies (names of African peoples and admittedly cognates, although the last of the three is difficult or impossible to find in any dictionary); llagas purulentas “purulent wounds” (llagas is glossed but the cognate purulentas is not, although it is unlikely that students will know its meaning). However, high-frequency words such as falda, fin, extender, and frío are glossed. Other words appear twice, as side glosses and as entries in the glossary.

 Nevertheless, the thematic essays provided by the author are quite comprehensible and the literary pieces provide students with practice in approaching authentic texts. As with any cultural reader, prior to adoption, teachers should review the readings to determine their appropriateness for their own purposes.

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AATF/FIPF To Hold Joint Meeting in Atlanta in 2004

The American Association of Teachers of French (AATF) and the Fédération internationale des professeurs de français (FIPF) will hold a joint meeting in July 2004 in Atlanta, GA: “Le Français, le défi de la diversité.”

The program will be directed by Chris Pinet, editor of the French Review, and Alain Braun, honorary president of the FIPF. They offer the following backdrop for the planning of this conference:

“The process of globalization leads us to question, in profound ways, how languages are learned and taught. The French language does not escape this debate. The United States, as multicultural as it is, appears paradoxically like a fer de lance in globalization efforts. This paradox underlines the theme of the next FIPF conference—“Le Français, le défi de la diversité”— held in conjunction with the AATF. Another apparent paradox would be to show how this globalization can be a trump card for the French language as much as it can rise to the challenge of diversity. A major debate can thus begin, debate in which specialists and practitioners from around the world will participate.”

The program will be forthcoming. The AATF and the FIPF invite you to mark your calendar for July 2004.