	Language and Linguistics in Context: Readings and Applications for Teachers	
Author:	Harriet Luria, Deborah M. Seymour & Trudy Smoke, Eds. (2006)	
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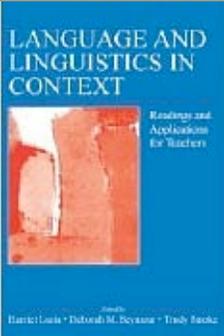
Overview

Harriet Luria, Deborah Seymour, and Trudy Smoke wanted to remake their introductory linguistics courses by "presenting readings from a variety of language fields that both introduce and clarify linguistic concepts" (p. xiii). This is exactly what they have done with *Language and Linguistics in Context: Readings and Applications for Teachers*, which contains over 30 chapters written by a variety of notable authors in the fields of Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition (SLA), Sociolinguistics, and Language Education, covering a range of language issues. Luria, Seymour, and Smoke's book is divided into three units of eleven chapters each. Each unit starts with an introduction and ends with a series of questions about the ideas presented in the various chapters, an applicable teaching activity, and a list of relevant print and web resources for that unit. Likewise, each chapter ends with a short list of questions and an "Extending your Understanding" activity, as well as a list of relevant terms from the reading.

Unit 1

Authors appearing in the first unit, "What is Language and How is it Acquired?", introduce, define, and build on important concepts relating to language acquisition, identity, and power, and discuss the issues critically.

Chapter	**Title**	**Comments**

Author(s)		
Lila R. Gleitman	A Human Universal: The Capacity to Learn a Language	First language acquisition overviews with examples
Patricia K. Kuhl	A New View of Language Acquisition	
Susan Gass	Fundamentals of Second Language Acquisition	Introduces influential terms and theories and provides many examples
David S. Martin	The English-Only Movement and Sign Language for Deaf Learners: An Instructive Parallel	Overview of the English-only movement
Keith Gilyard	From "Let's Flip the Script: An African American Discourse on Language, Literature, and Learning"	Debates teaching standard English to African Americans and Afro-Caribbean speakers of 'Broken English', as well as the importance of literature and multiculturalism in the language arts classroom
Ana Celia Zentella	Hablamos Spanish and English	Discusses the importance of teaching students the skills needed to facilitate code-switching
Josip Novakovich	This is no language. (Intimate Exile)	Three narratives on language and identity that bring to light the struggles non-native English speakers have with language and with being bilingual
Natasha Lvovich	Russian as a Second Language	
Meena Alexander	Language and Shame	
Ryuko Kubota	Unfinished Knowledge: The Story of Barbara	A concrete example of how your knowledge and attitude can affect your teaching
Alastair Pennycook	Sociolinguistics and Power	Critical theory in sociolinguistics

Unit 2

Unit two, "How does Language Change?", contains chapters covering topics such as the history of the English language and factors shaping language use.

Chapter Author(s)	Title	Comments

Tamara M. Green	Language Families	A reference for the major families of human languages and the surviving branches of the Indo-European tree
R.L. Trask	Where Did English Come From?	Traces the history of the English language from Proto-Germanic to present day English
Charles Barber	The Norman Conquest	Brief discussion on how the Norman Conquest influenced the English language
Kate Parry	People and Language	Provides concrete examples of how language is acquired and can evolve through family and social interaction
Homi K. Bhabha	Queen's English	Describes two speakers of non-standard English, touching on issues of judgment and prestige
Joshua A. Fishman	The New Linguistic Order	Discusses English dominance, globalization, regionalization, politics, and power
Chinua Achebe	The African Writer and the English Language	Argues that African writers should write in English rather than their regional language
Ralph W. Fasold	Ebonic Need Not Be English	Advocates that Ebonics should become a separate language in order to garner respect from linguists and other English speakers
John Edwards	Languages and Language Learning in the Face of World English	Discusses English dominance and the importance for English speakers to learn other languages
Deborah Cameron	Gender Issues in Language Change	Describes the role of women in linguistic change
James D. Armstrong	Homophobic Slang as Coercive Discourse among College Students	Reports on a research study investigating homophobic slang as used by male college students

Unit 3

The third unit, "What is Literacy?", builds on many of the ideas introduced in the previous two units, specifically language and power and how society shapes language

use.

Chapter Author(s)	Title	Comments
Michael Newman	Definitions of Literacy and Their Consequences	Contains various definitions of literacy and advocates for a new way to think about literacy
James Paul Gee	What is Literacy?	Builds on Krashen's (1982) acquisition vs. learning distinction
Lisa D. Delpit	The Politics of Teaching Literate Discourse	Encourages teaching the 'dominant' discourse to poor children and children of color
Glynda Hull & Katherine Schultz	Literacy and Learning Out of School: A Review of Theory and Research	Calls for more research on students' out-of-school literacy use and development
A. Suresh Canagarajah	Understanding Critical Writing	Draws connections and makes distinctions between teaching literacy skills to both ESL students and native English speakers
Sonia Nieto	Language, Literacy, and Culture: Intersections and Implications	Advocates student-centered learning and provides practical advice for ESL teachers
Marianne D. Pita & Sharon Utakis	Educational Policy for the Transnational Dominical Community	Pushes for educational reform beyond bilingual education
Gloria Nardini	Italian Patterns in the American Collandia Ladies' Club: How Do Women Make Bella Figura?	Provides an ethnographic example of how culture impacts discourse
Malini Ghose	Women and Empowerment Through Literacy	Focuses on issues of power and language while describing a literacy project in India
Robert Ji-Song Ku	Confessions of an English Professor: Globalization and the Anxiety of the "Standard" English	Describes the role of English in this English professor's life

	Practice	
Gary Tate, John McMillan, & Elizabeth Woodworth	Class Talk	Discusses issues of social class and encourages teachers to help their students talk about these issues

Critique

This book has many strengths, most notably its comprehensive selection of quality readings. In particular, the balance of theoretical articles and personal narratives allows students to see the human side of issues such as language and identity, which can be very impersonal when presented in a strictly theoretical format.

The readings themselves are, for the most part, very accessible, with the exception of Kuhl's chapter on language acquisition, which contains a high level of academic jargon. The inclusion of empirical studies, as seen in Nardini's, Ghose's, and Armstrong's chapters, adds variety to the primarily narrative and theoretical chapters in the book, and the varying methodologies these authors use in their research would be of interest to any graduate student thinking of doing research on language usage. The book is most useful, however, for introductory linguistics or sociolinguistics courses, especially those offered within a teacher education program. Timely issues, such as the English-only movement and bilingual education, are introduced, which is useful for both those teaching K-12 teacher preparation courses and those who may become teachers in multi-cultural, multi-ethnic school systems. However, an in-depth view of SLA pedagogy is lacking, although the topic is mentioned briefly in many of the readings.

While the authors state that they use the book for their introductory linguistics courses, in the beginning of their book they also group the book's chapters into alternative (to their unit) headings: second language acquisition pedagogy, the structure of language, and literacy. Such groupings are helpful for teachers who might consider using this book for a variety of courses. Also useful for teachers are the "Questions to Think About" and "Extending your Understanding" questions at the end of each chapter, which encourage students to reflect on concepts and ideas discussed in the readings and relate them to other readings in the book or their own views on language and/or language teaching. The list of "Terms to Define" following each reading encourages students to notice important words or phrases defined or discussed in the texts, such as *pidgin, acquisition*, and *ESL/EFL/ESOL*.

The end of each unit contains "Extending your Understanding and Making Connections" questions and "Applications for Teaching." These segments encourage students to tie ideas from the unit together to create a more comprehensive picture of an issue, and use such ideas in their teaching activities. However, I felt that the guidelines for the "Applications for Teaching" were very broad, especially for pre-service teachers. Asking students with no prior teaching experience to, for example, "create a lesson plan for a second language class keeping in mind the second language acquisition theories and practices you have read about in the articles" (p. 124) can be daunting. Teachers using this book for a course will no doubt

need to provide additional specifics on these assignments. The "Print and Web Resources" listed at the end of each unit provide easy reference to organizations such as the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education.

One noticeable deficiency of this book is its lack of research activities directly bearing on the readings: interaction with language in the form of small, hands-on research studies. Especially with regard to language acquisition, whether first or second, it is important for students to see for themselves the strategies learners use when acquiring language, how native and non-native speakers interact with each other, and how this interaction influences language acquisition. Similarly, students in a sociolinguistics course could observe a number of language varieties on their college campus and discover for themselves how social context influences the language that speakers use and hear. This type of interaction with language is seen very rarely in the questions and activities presented in the book and is something that, if included, would benefit both teachers and students.

This comprehensive selection of high-quality readings should stimulate and provoke thinking, what a compendium of perspectives should do. As a useful reference for issues germane to teaching, learning, and using English, both teachers and students in a variety of language courses could use it often to their advantage.

Reference

Krashen, S. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition.* Hayward, CA: Alemany Press.

Anne O'Bryan
Iowa State University
<aobryan@iastate.edu>