

BOOK REVIEWS

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RAJEND MESTHRIE, JOAN SWANN, ANA DEUMERT, & WILLIAM LEAP. *Introducing sociolinguistics. 2nd edition.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Pp. xxvi, 500. Pb. \$34.95.

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Written and developed by an international team of writers, *Introducing sociolinguistics (IS)* is an entry-level textbook designed for advanced undergraduate courses focusing on sociolinguistics, language and culture, and/or the sociology of language. Although it joins a distinguished set of textbooks designed to cover much of the same content published in recent years (e.g. Hudson 1996; Meyerhoff 2006; Holmes 2008; Wardhaugh 2009), *IS* stands out as unique from other introductory-level sociolinguistics texts for two reasons. First, it was developed by a team of co-authors currently situated in South Africa, the United States, and the United Kingdom, which means the book tends to focus on discussion and presentation drawn from a broader variety of research perspectives than other texts tend to use. Second, in defining the term *sociolinguistics*, the authors ultimately draw on a definition that includes aspects of both variationist sociolinguistics and the sociology of language. Although other textbooks typically include one or two chapters dedicated to the sociology of language as a way of attempting to include material drawn from this research paradigm, *IS* utilizes this expanded definition throughout the text, and this joint perspective makes for a distinctive and novel presentation of the material.

IS contains a total of thirteen chapters. Each chapter builds successively on previous chapters, making for a complementary set of readings that are both engaging and thought provoking for the reader. Chapter lengths range between twenty-eight and forty pages, with an average length of thirty-two pages, making the book well suited to use in the undergraduate classroom.

The opening chapters (Chs. 1–4) present a substantial overview of many of the core issues and foundational concepts usually discussed in introductory-level discussions of sociolinguistics: a basic understanding of societal conceptions of standard vs. vernacular language use, mono- and multilingualism, regional and social dialect variation, and a general understanding of the concepts of language variation and language change. Ch. 1 contains an overview of many of the issues that are covered in later chapters, while also defining important foundational concepts

like descriptivism, prescriptivism, and language as a social construct. In addition, it discusses how speaker ideologies regarding standard language use and language standardization develop, and it provides a discussion of several notions that have been used to define the speech community over the years in variationist and sociology-of-language studies. Ch. 2 presents the history and modern-day study of regional dialectology from a global perspective. Included are a discussion of well-chosen illustrative dialect studies conducted in India, Germany, England, Europe, and the United States (although as I discuss below, the US coverage is somewhat disappointing from a historical standpoint). Ch. 3 continues the discussion of dialect variation, this time from the vantage point of studies of social dialectology. As with the material in Ch. 2, the case studies provided as illustrative examples are again well-chosen, and the chapter spends time dealing with social class, race, ethnicity, and style. Ch. 4 moves on to a discussion of language variation and change from a variationist perspective, and both real-time and apparent-time studies and models of language change are discussed in some detail. In addition, sections on transmission, diffusion, and dialect maintenance and loss are also included.

In Chs. 5–7, the emphasis of the book changes to focusing on social issues surrounding language use in day-to-day interactions by speakers. Ch. 5 covers language choice and codeswitching, both in monolingual, but bidialectal, settings, as well as in multilingual settings. Also included are chapter subsections on codeswitching and style shifting, as well as accommodation. Ch. 6 focuses heavily on discourse and conversational analysis, and detailed illustrative examples are provided of several types of commonly studied discourse genres, including conversational speech, narrative, and asymmetrical talk. Several methods for analyzing conversation are also discussed: the study of silence, the study of the structure of narrative, the analysis of turn-taking, and the study of the use of discourse markers. Ch. 7 moves to a discussion of language and gender, providing a concise yet well rounded summary of major developments in the subfield, including some discussion of many of the major frameworks one has come to expect in a modern-day textbook: dominance, difference, and the social construction of identity (although a discussion of the communities of practice approach is notably missing). In addition, the chapter includes useful discussion of the use of both politeness theory and performance theory in language and gender research.

Chs. 8–12 shift the focus again, with the discussion turning to addressing several types of real-world language-use situations and issues that have traditionally been studied using applied methods of sociolinguistic analysis. Chs. 8 and 9 discuss language-contact situations and the outcome of language-contact processes, whereas Chs. 10–12 address situations where the impact of ideology on language-planning policies, language instruction and language choice in the classroom, and the complexities of power dynamics as expressed through language at both the macro- and microsociological level in society. Chs. 8 and 9 split discussion of contact linguistics into two parts. Ch. 8 deals specifically with language

maintenance, language shift, and language death, while Ch. 9 focuses on pidgin and creole formation. Like the regional dialects chapter, both chapters draw on data from a variety of global locations and make for an excellent and data-rich handling of the subject matter.

Ch. 10 begins with a discussion of the critical discourse-analysis paradigm, and then demonstrates how work within this paradigm has been able to highlight and dissect the manipulation of power as expressed through language in a variety of contexts, including propaganda, advertising, language in the media more generally, and political satire. In addition, the chapter focuses extensively on Bourdieu's (1977; 1984) work on the sociolinguistics of symbolic power, presenting a variety of illustrative examples of how Bourdieu's approach to critical discourse analysis can be applied to the analysis of discourse. Ch. 11 focuses on a concise discussion of including the politics of standard language selection for instruction, arguments for and against the use of social and regional dialect varieties as the language of instruction, and the critical analysis of classroom discourse. Ch. 12 continues the discussion of the impact of language ideology on real-world language-use issues by providing a detailed discussion of language-planning and language-policy choices as they are often made by schools, governments, and other language-planning bodies. As with previous chapters, Ch. 12 draws on a wide variety of global data, with two illustrative examples drawn from Norway and South Africa used to discuss all of the major themes of the chapter.

Ch. 13 rounds out the book in a rather interesting and novel way. Unlike many of the other sociolinguistic textbooks currently available on the market that do not include such a discussion (with the Lucas & Valli chapter in Rickford & Finnegan (2004) providing a notable exception), Ch. 13 is a chapter dedicated to the sociolinguistics of sign language. Among the issues discussed within it are how the rule-governed aspects of sign language are similar to and differ from spoken language, general aspects of how the British and American systems differ from, and are similar to, one another, and how variation by factors such as race and register impact sign usage. In addition, some focus is given to the deaf community as a linguistic minority, and also how the processes of language contact, diaglossia, and codeswitching impact the use of sign language.

Overall, as the discussion above indicates, *IS* is a highly readable introductory text, and it will likely keep students both engaged and captivated throughout the course of the book. As I mentioned at the outset, the international background of the authors is clearly a plus: not only is the reader given a wider perspective on the research issues discussed throughout the book, he or she is also presented with illustrative data drawn from a much larger set of locales in many chapters than is often found in other textbooks with a similar focus and purpose. This advantage is most clearly seen in the chapters on regional dialect variation, language contact, codeswitching, and language policy and planning. For example, the chapter "Language in interaction" provides a nice cross-blend of interactional and variationist conversational-analysis techniques, which is also employed to

similar useful effect in the “Language and gender” chapter. In addition, the multiple-author approach adopted by the authors allows for better coverage of a maximal number of the topics, as each author is able to apply his or her knowledge in the fields he or she is strongest in, an approach that delivers a number of home runs throughout the book. As also noted earlier, the expanded definition of sociolinguistics used by the authors throughout the text makes for a more diverse discussion of many of the topics than textbooks that tend to adopt either a primarily variationist perspective or a primarily sociology of language-based perspective on the material.

Although the text clearly has a number of strengths, there are also a couple of areas in which the book delivers less strongly, and there are two relatively minor additions I believe the authors might wish to consider including in the next edition that would enhance the usefulness of the text. First, although the chapter on regional dialectology is highly informative and its focus on international dialect surveys is highly useful, the lack of discussion of traditional dialect studies in the United States (most notably *The linguistic atlas of the United States and Canada*, especially publications typically discussed from the project, such as Kurath & McDavid 1961, Kurath, Marcus, Bloch, & Bloch 1939–1943, and Pederson, McDaniel, & Adam 1986–1993) leaves a rather noticeable hole, not only in the “Regional dialectology” chapter itself, but even more noticeably, in the discussion of the contributions to the holistic study of language variation and change and regional dialect variation made by *The atlas of North American English* (ANAE; Labov, Ash, & Boberg 2006), as discussed in Ch. 4 (136–44). Here, although the strengths and notable contributions of the ANAE over previous studies are discussed, no direct comparisons of the ANAE approach to earlier approaches is actually made, given the lack of inclusion of discussion of earlier studies. Therefore, the inclusion of a discussion of the older *Atlas* material would fill this gap while also enhancing the completeness of coverage of earlier studies of regional dialect variation.

A second addition would be a further revision of the language and gender chapter to include explicit discussion of the communities of practice model (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet 1993), as well as studies exemplifying the use of this framework in action. Considering that the latest edition of the book was printed in revised and updated form in 2009, the omission of an explicit discussion of this framework was somewhat surprising, given that studies utilizing the framework (both within gender studies and beyond) have been increasingly prevalent. The inclusion of studies conducted using this framework could also allow more discussion of the interaction of gender and race on influencing language variation to be included (via studies such as Bucholtz 2001, Mallinson & Childs 2007, or Nagar 2008), an area which is somewhat underexplored in the current edition.

These minor caveats aside, however, *IS* is clearly a powerful addition to the available canon of “introduction to sociolinguistics” textbooks, and it will prove especially useful to instructors looking for a text with an international focus. In

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addition, it will also prove useful to instructors looking to cover broader aspects of sociolinguistics beyond the variationist paradigm. Overall, *IS* is a wonderful introductory textbook, and one that will be a welcome addition to the syllabi of instructors teaching advanced undergraduate courses in sociolinguistics and the sociology of language.

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JOHN EDWARDS, *Language diversity in the classroom*. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, 2010. Pp. iv, 338. Pb. \$49.95.

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Language diversity in the classroom (henceforth, *Language*) is an extensive overview of linguistic diversity in numerous (educational) settings, accumulating