

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Learning to Read in Different Languages by Sarah Hudelson

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instructors to allow second-language students to attend to *CONTENT* in their attempts at communication in the target language, rather than to *FORM*, the normal preoccupation of language teachers. Widdowson suggests that our attitudes as teachers seem to be that 'it does not matter what nonsense they produce as long as they produce it in correct sentences' (169).

The other articles will be of interest mostly to researchers and students of second-language acquisition. S. P. Corder, in a very clear and brief paper, updates the Interlanguage Hypothesis. L. Dickerson and W. B. Dickerson report on a model for research in the acquisition of phonology which makes some use of Labov's model of variability. A. Fathman's 'Similarities and simplification in the interlanguage of second language learners' is an excellent piece of research which focuses on morpheme acquisition order. W. Zydattis' 'Eliciting foreign language learners' semantic intuitions' is an attempt to use learners' intuitions about acceptability of the form of sentences to determine more about their own levels of acquisition of structure. Unfortunately, the heavy use of translation in the methodology clouds the picture considerably. The article by E. Levenston and S. Blum, 'Aspects of lexical simplification in the speech and writing of advanced adult learners', deals with the acquisition of the correct range of meaning of a lexical item, using native speakers of Hebrew. M. Olsson's 'Model for the interpretation of utterances' is a highly interesting attempt to systematize the factors which produce ease or difficulty in the interpretation of sentences which contain learner errors. He works with 'communicative value', by which he means 'the degree to which a speaker succeeds in conveying the intended information to a receiver' (72). J. Meisel's 'Linguistic simplification: A study of immigrant workers' speech and foreigner talk' is interesting to me because he works with immigrants who have achieved extremely low levels of proficiency in the target language. Valdman's study, already mentioned, includes data from simplified French and French-Vietnamese pidgin. E. Traugott's 'Natural Semantax: Its role in the study of second language acquisition' is the longest of the collection; she is concerned with 'the cognitive processes of production, specifically those involving expression of semantic and semantically-related syntactic categories' (135). [T. D. TERRELL, *University of California, Irvine.*]

Learning to read in different languages. Ed. by SARAH HUDELSON. (Linguistics and literacy series, 1.) Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1981. Pp. xiii, 132.

It has long been assumed, by teachers and researchers alike, that reading entails a letter-by-letter processing of printed stimuli, and that the difficulty involved in reading a particular language depends on its degree of sound-symbol correspondence. However, recent psycholinguistic inquiries into the cognitive, linguistic, and experiential bases of reading indicate that reading is more contextual than graphic; that effective readers use their knowledge of language and the world around them, along with selected visual cues, to hypothesize about the meaning of texts; and that this 'psycholinguistic guessing game' is played by the same basic rules, regardless of the language involved.

The eleven papers in this volume are dedicated to demonstrating empirically the universal nature of the reading process through comparison of learning strategies for first and second language reading. A variety of languages are examined—including Spanish, Yiddish, Polish, Arabic, German, Vietnamese, Japanese, and even American Sign Language. English is the second language in every case. Six of the articles look at children, and four involve adults.

Virtually all utilize the technique of 'miscue analysis' developed by Kenneth Goodman, whose introductory paper explains the rationale behind this procedure. Miscue analysis is a way of understanding deviation from print in oral reading as a reflection of the psycholinguistic process of constructing meaning through hypotheses and utilization of linguistic redundancy. Subjects read passages aloud and then retell what they have read, as a measure of their comprehension. Responses differing from the printed stimulus are painstakingly coded as to graphic and phonemic similarity, syntactic and semantic acceptability, semantic change, corrections, intonation, dialect variation, and grammatical function. Proficiency judgments are based upon the kinds of miscues made, not simply the quantity.

Two other approaches to reading illustrated in the volume share the same psycholinguistic orientation: clozentropy, an application of information theory to the scoring of cloze tests, and textual or discourse analysis.

In general, the papers provide evidence that first and second language reading share many strategies, and that adults and children pass through similar developmental stages in reading acquisition. All the contributions to the volume illustrate the active, problem-solving nature of reading in ways that can assist teachers in examining their own teaching practices, as well as in monitoring individual students. They will also be of interest to researchers in the fields of reading, psycholinguistics, bilingualism, and language learning. [ALICIA POUSADA, *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, CUNY.*]

Measuring spoken language proficiency. Ed. by JAMES R. FRITH. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1980. Pp. vi, 69. \$3.95.

Papers presented as part of the preliminary sessions of the 1980 Georgetown Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics make up this slender volume. Participants included representatives from the Foreign Service Institute, Defense Language Institute, Educational Testing Service, Central Intelligence Agency Language School, Public Service Commission of Canada, American Council on Education, and Pomona College. They address the pressing need for better ways to measure language skills, and for the establishment of clear competency or proficiency standards through examination of particular instruments and techniques.

All the papers are concerned directly or indirectly with the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) oral interview, which has served since its development in 1956 as a benchmark in the field of language testing. M. L. Adams (pp. 1–6) and R. T. Clifford (27–30) attempt to ascertain the relative weight of the factors of accent, comprehension, fluency, grammar, and vocabulary in determining the global FSI score. F. A. Cartier (7–14) and P. Lowe & R. T. Clifford (31–9) present tests which try to overcome the basic drawback of the FSI—the fact that, in field situations, it is often impossible to find highly-trained personnel for face-to-face interviews.

J. Clark (15–26) outlines the procedures necessary for the development of a uniform proficiency measure which can be used in diverse settings with the results reported on a single uniform scale. R. E. Mareschal (40–59) reports on the functional approach used for the evalu-

ation of communicative competence in Canada, where the government's bilingual policy mandates proficiency in English and French for individuals employed in official capacities.

The volume closes with two brief papers (D. Whitney, 60–63; H. T. Young, 64–9) concerning the potential use of the FSI ratings for university placement, creditation, grant screening, exit criteria etc.

In sum, the papers contained here (though quite abbreviated) offer some insight into current concerns within the field of language proficiency measurement, and into the future envisioned by its practitioners. [ALICIA POUSADA, *Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, CUNY.*]

Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace.

By JOSEPH M. WILLIAMS. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman, 1981. 288 pp. \$8.95.

This book will be of special interest to linguists, since Williams draws on linguistic theory as the basis for many of his analyses and descriptions of English style. And because many linguists work in English departments where they teach English composition in addition to linguistics, this book will satisfy their need for a linguistically sophisticated composition textbook.

The book is divided into ten lessons. Each lesson opens with a discussion of the general principle of writing covered in that chapter, and then goes on to break the principle down into a number of stylistic devices for readers to apply in their own writing.

W's explanation of the relation between passives and context is unique in composition texts. He discusses (107–9) the relationships between subject and agent, verb and action, and object and goal. Rather than ruling out passives (as many style guides do), W shows how the context of a sentence often requires them. He also relates passives (110–12) to new and old information.

W defines 'metadiscourse' as the way we 'directly or indirectly tell our audience how they should take our ideas' (47). His examples of this—changing the subject, announcing the certainty of an idea—recall the work of J. R. Ross, John Austin, and others on performatives and speech acts. W divides metadiscourse into three stylistic groups: 'Hedges and emphatics' (48–9), e.g. *perhaps, as everyone knows*; 'Sequencers and topicalizers' (49–51), e.g. *Where X is con-*