REVIEWS

Richard F. Young: DISCURSIVE PRACTICE IN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING. Wiley-Blackwell, 2009.

In *Discursive Practice in Language Learning and Teaching*, Richard Young shows how recent seemingly diverse theoretical perspectives and empirical studies in linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, anthropology, sociology, and philosophy can be synthesized to provide language educators and language education researchers with rich descriptive and analytical means to investigate the relationship between language learning and learning contexts. Calling this synthesis a discursive practice approach, he defines practice as 'performance in context' (p. 2) and discourse as the use of linguistic but also other semiotic resources ['values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places' (Gee 1999: 18)] to engage in action. For him,

> The aim of discursive practice [theory and research] is to describe both the global context of action and the communicative resources that participants employ in local action. When the context of a practice is known and the configuration of communicative resources is described, the ultimate aim of Practice Theory is to explain the ways in which the global context affects the local employment of resources and vice versa. (p. 3)

Quoting a Chinese woman who describes how social norms for expressing love are different in China and Australia, Young argues that understanding someone's speech involves more than comprehending the meanings of the words they use, but also recognizing the contexts in which they engage and have engaged in the past in discursive practice. This chapter contains a great deal of linguistic, sociolinguistic, and social theory and might be better understood by beginners after they have read the more detailed explications of the theory and research in later sections of the book.

Chapter 2 is also concerned with putting forth a basic theoretical framework, with a focus on practice, and *practice theory*. The contributions of language philosophers, such as Wittgenstein, Austin, and Searle are examined accompanied by engaging examples. Next, he reviews anthropologist B. Malinowski's approach to the ethnography of language, and its subsequent development by J.R. Firth and others. These descriptions of the antecedents to the later development of the field of sociolinguistics are valuable for their clear depiction of the development of theory over time. Young also provides an extensive and accessible description of Hymes' (1972) SPEAKING mnemonic. He argues, however, that careful description of the immediate contexts of speech acts are inadequate to understand how 'talk...is profoundly influenced by processes that occur beyond the temporal and spatial location of the immediate occasion of the interaction' (Erickson 2004: viii cited in Young 2009: 45), while

at the same time not forgetting that humans have agency in reflecting, resist-ing, and creating those distal processes. This point becomes the organizing principle of the book: how a theory of language use as social practice (talk-in-context) can be used to more nearly adequately describe and explain language learning and teaching and how such understandings might guide instructional practice.

The breadth of Young's review of both theoretical and empirical studies of language use in context throughout the book is described by Lourdes Ortega in her Introduction to Young's book as 'expand[ing] the intellectual landscape of SLA' (p. viii) and Chapter 3 proves no exception. Beginning with a brief dis-cussion of conversation analysis and ethnomethodology, showing that such analysts have differed in their estimation of the proper scope of investigation of context, Young goes on to describe Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) analysis of language in use, linking this with Gee's (1999) influential description of 'big D' dis-course, and discussion of the spatial dimensions of understanding language usage (Gumperz 2000). Scholars and graduate students in particular will find this lucid synthesis very helpful. Young then turns to examining four, what he terms 'paradigmatic', studies of second language learning in context that take different approaches to the study of context: applied linguistic, ethnographic, emotional, and political. His descriptions of these studies are thorough as well as accurate, and he provides reference to other studies that exemplify the approaches.

Chapter 4 focuses on systematic methods of investigating in talk-in-context, recognizing that the studies in Chapter 3 vary in the attention they pay to linguistic analysis. He provides extended descriptions of systemic functional grammar and conversation analysis and shows how they might offer useful means for focusing attention on the verbal, nonverbal, and interactional resources participants use in discursive practices. In this Chapter, as in others, Young provides transcripts of varied kinds of verbal interactions to illustrate methods for analysis, and in doing so, invites readers to engage in analysis along with the author.

Chapters 5 and 6 may be of most interest to language educators and language education researchers. In Chapter 5, Young takes up the question of how dis-cursive practice might describe and explain language learning. His descriptions of language socialization theory and studies that ground themselves in second language socialization perspectives, he shows how it is important not to con-ceive of language learning as an individual and unproblematic trajectory of increasing competence for a learner; rather, he notes that learners must 'battle for subjectivity' (p. 143) in a second language community (as they might be surmised to do in a first language community as well). He also shows the com-plexity of the notion of community (that social grouping that learners are being socialized into), arguing that seeing learning as situated (Lave and Wenger 1991) is congruent with a practice theory perspective. Situated learning, he observes, sees learning as changing participation in practice (Rogoff 2003) and allows for examination of learner identity, context, agency, other people, and

tools. He illustrates this with a description of one of his own studies of a learner's changing participation in writing conferences over time.

Chapter 6 focuses on the 'important role of context in understanding language teaching and testing' (p. 183), and how the notion of discursive practice might provide ways to understand those activities in new ways. He first reviews Hall's (2004) observation of a secondary school foreign language class, showing that the primary practice (defined as 'human activities that are recurrent, have specific verbal and interactional architectures and form the everyday pivot between society and the individual') (p. 183) in the class was practising speaking. Practising speaking involved the teacher asking students to provide orally, Spanish words for objects the teacher presented. Hall described the cooperation of the students in providing these words, but also commented on how students engaged in private conversations with one another, did homework and 'in other ways liv[ed] quietly along the border of the instructional practice' (p. 84). In this way, students and teachers played out a familiar script of teacher authority and student compliance, but the students did not, Young argues, engage in language practices that would be of any use to them outside the classroom context. He then goes on to review attempts to tie language instruction to learners' perceived needs outside the classroom, arguing, however, that classrooms are not able to simulate accurately outside-classroom contexts, and that it is not only language that makes particular kinds of discourse practices possible or successful. Young then discusses critical pedagogy and provides descriptions of a variety of ways language educators have made connections among language, power, ideology, and identity in working with students. Finally, Young examines how language testing might be conceptualized from a discursive practice perspective and points out the many problematic aspects of high stakes language tests and their complicity in unequal distribution of resources.

As already observed, the breadth of Young's review of literature in and around language learning and teaching in this book is formidable. The book is organized around examples of analyses, so that readers can participate in those analyses and thus concepts can be tied to particular stories or individuals. Occasionally, I found the detail of the examples seemed to obscure the conceptual threads of the overall argument, but the summaries at the end of each chapter helped a great deal in this regard. I can imagine working through this book with a graduate class in second language teaching, with its many explanations of the historical provenances of theories, studies, and so on. Particularly appreciated may be the care with which he locates this scholarship within broader intellectual histories, outlining major debates in the field, and making suggestions for interested readers about where to go for further study.

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Virginia LoCastro: PRAGMATICS FOR LANGUAGE EDUCATORS: A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PERSPECTIVE. Routledge, 2012.

Anyone who sets out to write an introduction to pragmatics must start by addressing two questions. First, there is the question of how to define what pragmatics is and how it fits into the study of language more generally. Secondly, there is the question of how much of the vast and multifarious range of topics and methodologies that share the heading 'pragmatics' to include. LoCastro offers a clear answer to the first question: 'Pragmatics concerns speaker meaning, specifically deriving the intended communicative message from what is said in a particular context' (p. 7). In answer to the second, she is equally explicit: the book focuses 'on the interface of pragmatics and sociolinguistics, where contextual features are considered to contribute essential dynamics to interpreting interactional meaning' (p. xii).

The sustained focus on the interface between pragmatics and sociolinguistics, or on 'sociopragmatics', provides the book with its undoubted strengths although, as I will discuss below, it is also the source of some weaknesses. The book appears in Routledge's 'ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional' series, intended for use with those training at graduate level to teach English as a second language. By far the largest section is Part II, 'Core Areas of Pragmatics', which offers an overview of a range of ways in which context, specifically cultural context, effects how language is used and understood in different social settings. Chapters in this section cover 'Cross-cultural Pragmatics', 'Interlanguage Pragmatics', 'Politeness', 'Interactional Construction of Identity', 'Institutional Talk', 'Language, Gender and Power', and 'Classroom Pragmatic Development'. They are illustrated with numerous relevant