

BOOK NOTICES

CORPUS PROCESSING FOR LEXICAL ACQUISITION. *Branimir Boguraev and James Pustejovsky (Eds.)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 245. \$32.50 cloth.

This book contains 11 papers on the computational extraction of lexical structure from text input and text search: That is what is meant here by *lexical acquisition*. The introduction sets out the prospects for automatic lexical acquisition and is followed by three papers on proper name identification and categorization. These offer different computational solutions to the quandaries proper names pose for delimitation, classification, standardization, and discourse reference. For example, where is the person in *Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan* and how should this to be linked to *Fed Chief*? The advance in these papers is their attempt to solve proper naming via text structure alone, which makes the systems more savvy than brute look-up programs.

Thereafter come two studies of automatic sense enhancement and resolution that show how standard lexical hierarchies, like those of WordNet, can be modified and improved through the addition of global and local contextual categories (e.g., topic, genre, frame-like categories, and co-occurrence templates). Importantly, these enhancements can be done automatically through a subtle and thorough analysis of running textual context.

The final five papers examine automatic lexical categorization and subcategorization, multilingual predicate-argument mapping, and sense determination through a variety of pattern-based cluster analyses driven by structural and functional aspects of the lexicon. One striking result is the difficulty of verb-meaning categorization, probably because categorical decisions for verbs, as nonsortals, must be inferred from arguments.

Parts of this book remind me of my occasional annoyance with computational studies that criticize linguistics for not having done something it has in fact done: to see the claims about ostensible failures to consider the real semantic function, or the theoretical significance, of proper nouns. Still, the book presents a compelling case for statistical language analysis, a mainstay of the '50s and '60s but now enjoying a renaissance.

What could these papers do for SLA? Is SLA a statistical learning problem? Can we design self-adjusting CAI systems for second language teaching? Can there be accurate and efficient aids to translation? Answers to these questions should make reference to this book.

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PERSPECTIVES ON FOREIGN LANGUAGE POLICY: STUDIES IN HONOUR OF THEO VAN ELS. *Theo Bongaerts and Kees de Bot (Eds.)*. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 1997. Pp. vi + 223. \$54.00 cloth.

All too often, the festschrift consists of a disparate and uneven collection of papers on a range of subjects that often only vaguely intersect with the interests of the individual whose work is being honored by the volume. This is a festschrift with a difference. It consists of a coherent collection of original papers addressing an area of applied linguistics in which Van Els made his most outstanding contribution, that of foreign language policy. The collection is given added coherence by the fact that most contributors relate their papers to the work carried out by Van Els and his team on the Dutch National Action Programme on Foreign Languages. Although the majority of the papers describe initiatives in the Netherlands, there are also contributions from researchers working in a range of other contexts including Israel, the United States, and Finland. As the editors of the volume point out, the contributions from abroad highlight the international impact of Van Els's work on language policy.

Although the move toward policies of bi- and multilingualism has been most dramatic in Europe in recent years, similar moves are apparent in cultures as diverse as Australia, Israel, and Hong Kong. For teachers, researchers, and policy makers working in these contexts, this collection is both pertinent and timely. Not only does it present rich, descriptive accounts of language policies in a range of contexts, it also summarizes a great deal of contemporary research into language policy and planning. Much of this work is of direct relevance to second language acquisition researchers.

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THE ELEMENTS OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING. *Walter Grauberg*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 1997. Pp. xiv + 263. \$95.00 cloth, \$34.95 paper.

Grauberg has undertaken the ambitious task of presenting in a relatively short book the linguistic and pedagogical aspects of teaching French and German as foreign languages. Despite many serious omissions, including a framework for discussing language proficiency, his classroom observations may prove useful for future French and German teachers.

The book is divided into three parts. Part 1 examines the substance of language teaching: essentially, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. Part 2 discusses the four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Part 3 briefly discusses the educational perspective and the benefits of foreign language study.

Grauberg devotes chapters 1–3 of the book to the role, the learning, and the teaching of vocabulary, but he fails to mention the major frequency studies of spoken German or to point out how crucial vocabulary acquisition is in the beginning stages of language

acquisition. Chapters 4–9, on the teaching of French noun and verb phrases and German noun phrases and word order, remain quite elementary, even problematic. In stating unequivocally that verb-final position is obligatory for subordinate clauses, he overlooks the overwhelming evidence for verb-second placement with *weil*, *obwohl*, and *trotzdem* in spoken German. Chapters 10–14 are devoted to the pronunciation of French and German. In his treatment of German sounds, he completely overlooks German consonant clusters and distributional aspects of German consonants as causes for pronunciation problems. Nowhere does he mention the new German spelling reform.

To be sure, Grauberg recognizes the difficulty of trying to appeal to both teachers and SLA researchers (p. vii). Yet he omits far too many theoretical sources to satisfy linguists, and his failure to include chapters on testing and assessment, learner characteristics, lesson planning, and, most importantly, culture will disappoint most teachers. A cursory review of the omissions in his bibliography (e.g., Canale & Swain, Kramsch, and Seelye on teaching culture; Krashen & Terrell on the natural approach; Omaggio Hadley on proficiency teaching) and the standard grammatical descriptions for the French and German languages will make this book problematic for use in any methods course.

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REFLECTION AND STRATEGIES IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING. *Jennifer Ridley*. Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1997. Pp. 260. \$51.95 paper.

Ridley addresses two developments in language teaching and SLA research. The first development is toward learner autonomy through self-reflection. None of her subjects reported learning a language in a classroom with a focus on learning strategies, though Ridley documents their individual preferred learning strategies with data from the beginning of the study. She then formulates her first hypothesis, “that individual learners have their own preferred lexical problem-solving strategies and patterns of reflective monitoring which are manifest when they speak and also write in the target language” (p. 20).

The second development is the study of the role of consciousness in SLA. Ridley argues that there is a positive relationship between conscious knowledge and language learning. Ridley operationalizes conscious knowledge as “instances where learners cite a rule or deliberately apply their knowledge of the target language linguistic system as they try to solve a lexical or grammatical problem” (p. 225).

From these two research areas, Ridley formulates the second hypothesis of the study, that “there is a direct and bidirectional relationship between learners’ preferred second language performance strategy styles and their beliefs about foreign language learning, from which they develop a preferred personal learning agenda, or conscious approach” (p. 21).

To test the hypotheses, Ridley used three translation tasks from English into German. Two were written tasks: one was an informational magazine article and one was a fic-

tional passage. The oral task was picture storytelling. After each task, the subjects listened to recordings of their commentaries as they performed the tasks and provided retrospective accounts of their lexical problem-solving behavior. Recorded interviews in the target language and in English were also data sources. Finally, a nonverbal task measured impulsivity and reflectiveness in each subject.

Ridley found that both hypotheses are supported by her study. As she points out, this is probably not surprising information to practitioners. The value of this book lies more in the lucid discussion of the empirical and theoretical aspects of the nature of consciousness, monitoring, and strategic problem solving in SLA. Ridley's work will help teachers, researchers, and sociolinguists define and study these constructs with other students and other target languages.

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BILINGUAL EDUCATION: TEACHERS' NARRATIVES. Nancy Lemberger. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 1997. Pp. ix + 206. \$24.95 paper.

Nancy Lemberger's *Bilingual education: Teachers' narratives* is an interesting book, although probably not to SLA-type scholars. *Bilingual education* is written "to inform pre-service and veteran teachers about the field of bilingual education on a very personal level" (back cover), presumably to be used as a text.

The book consists of three parts. Part 1 reads like a retained dissertation text: a very brief rationale from the literature for using "teachers' voices" in educational research and an atheoretical chapter on the context of bilingual education written from a typical liberal politically correct perspective. Nonetheless, the heart of the book is part 2, consisting of eight teachers' narratives. The stories here (really semistructured interviews) show how appropriate such an approach can be and the generalizations one can draw from such tales in getting a grassroots insight into what we call bilingual education—Lemberger does so herself in chapter 12.

In reading teachers' narratives one is free to draw one's own conclusions. Here are some of mine.

According to an old Swedish EFL experiment, in the hands of a master teacher, all methods are best. It is with inexperienced and mediocre teachers that methods become important.

The L1 is only tangentially important in these programs; what does matter is that the children have a safe place, know what is going on, understand the tasks they are set, and have fun in school. Diana's narrative makes this point especially clear with children speaking many different Chinese dialects (they really are separate languages, which should have been explained) in her classroom.

Finally, in the teachers' comments on the other sectors of their schools—the lack of administrative support, the negative attitudes of the regular teachers, the other BE teachers' lack of training, the shortage of materials—Lemberger documents why bilingual education is not working and shows that it is not a question of language.

Part 3 is a grabbag of odds and ends: an annotated bibliography, discussion of texts

and materials, list of useful addresses such as NABE, and other items that are no doubt helpful for a beginning teacher.

Bilingual education is an inspirational but heartbreaking book to read, especially for someone like me who spent so much passion in the '70s as an advocate for bilingual education.

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POWER, PEDAGOGY, AND PRACTICE. *Tricia Hedge and Norman Whitney (Eds.)*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996. Pp. xi + 398. £19.40 paper.

This book is a compilation of informative chapters containing selected papers (1988–1995) that first appeared in the *English Language Teaching Journal*, edited by Hedge and Whitney. The chapters have been reorganized “to provide a useful resource for teachers, trainee teachers, teacher educators, students, and researchers” (p. 1).

The volume is composed of three sections, each reflected within the title: “Power,” “Pedagogy,” and “Practice.” The editors of this volume attempt to capture developmental changes within the English teaching profession during their ELT editorial tenure.

Part 1, dealing with “Power,” could have easily been subsumed under a heading focused on politics. The corresponding chapters explore such themes as empowerment, gender, and standard English, along with language and culture and other topics that affected the education of socially diverse populations in Britain and elsewhere.

Part 2, which concentrates on “Pedagogy,” is devoted to matters regarding professional teacher development and teacher education. English teaching is broadly defined in this portion of the text, reflecting such growing demands on the profession as business English and English for special purposes.

Part 3 is devoted to “Practice” and—unlike part 2—is aimed at broader classroom concerns beyond the nuts and bolts of specific pedagogical practice. Communication within classrooms and the nature of the kind of communicative tasks are included, as are chapters pertaining to process approaches to writing, evaluation, and surveys of innovative teaching materials.

In total, 27 chapters appear along with biographical profiles of each author and a brief conclusion that emphasizes the editorial goals that Hedge and Whitney shared in their professional devotion to language, learning, and teaching. They also demonstrate the maturation of ELT under their leadership, as they broached sensitive matters of political, cultural, and social contexts that were rarely considered by the staid founders of their influential journal.

This text will have broad appeal as a useful volume for English educators and students of English who recognize the value of teaching excellence in a dynamic world in which English and English teaching represent a global growth industry of considerable proportion.

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EVALUATING RESEARCH ARTICLES FROM START TO FINISH. *Ellen R. Girden*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996. Pp. xi + 290. \$24.95 paper.

As I was preparing to do a workshop on research in second language acquisition, *Evaluating research articles* by Girden arrived on my desk. The timing was perfect and I was pleased to have this additional resource at my disposal. The book is designed for a wide-ranging audience, with examples presented from a variety of fields (e.g., social work, education, medicine, and psychology), although second language acquisition is not among them. The studies cited as examples include studies that are flawed in one way or the other, with the author leading the reader to understand the flaws.

The book is designed as a supplement to texts in a course on research methods. As the author states, the book is not intended as a primary text in a course devoted to teaching research design and basic statistics. In fact, Girden notes that "the intended audience is assumed to be familiar with elementary research design and have at least a knowledge of intermediate-level statistics" (pp. ix-x). Because most courses taught in graduate programs in TESL or SLA are elementary in nature, this book is probably not useful as a supplementary text. However, because most of these courses do deal with evaluating research, the book may prove to be an excellent resource tool for the faculty who teach them.

The chapters treat a wide range of topics, including quantitative studies (e.g., chapters on correlation, regression analysis, and factor analysis) and qualitative studies (e.g., chapters on narrative analysis and surveys). Within each chapter, Girden presents excerpts from published studies, critiques of those studies, questions and answers about those studies, and suggestions for additional readings about each topic.

Evaluating research articles is a useful resource for anyone teaching a course in research methods. However, as noted above, its usefulness even as a supplementary text is limited given its assumption that users will have an intermediate-level knowledge of statistics.

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LANGUAGE LEARNING THROUGH SOCIAL COMPUTING: OCCASIONAL PAPERS OF THE APPLIED LINGUISTICS ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA, 16. *Robert Debski, June Gassin, and Mike Smith (Eds.)*. Melbourne: ALAA & The Horwood Language Centre, 1997. Pp. viii + 224. A\$12.00 paper.

The papers in *Language learning through social computing* introduce the classroom practices and philosophical underpinnings of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which builds on collaborative approaches to L2 teaching and learning. The majority of the essays address general issues in collaborative learning through CALL, describing the authors' experience and reflections on L2 activities designed to engage learners in interesting discussions and projects, many of which rely on target language materials from the Internet.

Papers by John Barson (Stanford), Peter Patrikis (Consortium for Language Teaching and Learning in the U.S.), and two papers by Robert Debski (University of Melbourne) offer reflections about the learning contexts created through Internet-based projects and the potential effects of such projects for second language acquisition. Themes include learners' engagement, socialization, self-identity, and creativity. Brief examples of software are provided.

Papers by Noëlle Collombet-Sankey (University of Melbourne), Mike Levy (University of Queensland), and Mark Warschauer (University of Hawai'i) and Suzanne Lepeintre (University of Washington) focus on specific Internet-based projects, offering their own analyses in addition to some data from learners' work. The first describes how Internet materials were used in a third-year university French course to help increase learners' communicative competence and cultural literacy. The second describes collaborative projects in a course for language teacher education. The third best captures the unpredictability and engagement of learner-contingent activity through description of an international discussion list for ESL or EFL learners.

The other two papers appear less aligned with the theme of social computing, which is understood to mean learning through collaboration with other speakers of the target language. A paper by Richard Harrison (University of Melbourne) describes the foundations underlying development of interactive video materials for Japanese, and one by Paul Gruba (University of Melbourne) provides some descriptive data on the use of such materials.

As a whole, these papers offer a glimpse of current philosophy and practice in the collaborative learning that can be constructed through the use of technology.

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COMPUTATIONAL APPROACHES TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION. *Michael R. Brent (Ed.)*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997. Pp. 199. \$20.00 paper.

This book is a timely and important contribution to the study of language acquisition. It should be of value to those engaged in active research in this field, as well as to the general reader with an interest in language acquisition and linguistics. The papers are rather technical and may be difficult for the general reader, but the introductory essay by the editor, Brent, goes a long way to provide the background and describe the contents of the other essays in a more comprehensible language for the nontechnical reader. It should be pointed out, however, that this book is about language acquisition in general (including the theory of learning), particularly the computational approach in the research. It is not specifically concerned with second language acquisition.

The book consists of five research reports written by different authors. The first paper, by Brent, gives a survey of advances in the computational study of language acquisition during the past decade and "provides a tutorial introduction to computational studies of how children learn their native languages. Its aim is to make recent advances accessible to the broader research community, and to place them in the context of cur-

rent theoretical issues" (p. 1). The author provides reviews and summaries of the other four papers in the volume. The second paper, by Siskind, presents a computational study of the lexical acquisition and the acquisition of word-to-meaning mapping by children. The third paper, by Brent and Cartwright, also deals with lexical acquisition, but specifically from the process of children segmenting speech utterances into words. In the fourth paper, Resnick proposes an information-theoretic model of selection constraints that, for example, allows a child to acquire some semantic property of an unknown verb on the basis of the direct object it takes. In the last paper, Niyogi and Berwick provide mathematical formalization for parameter setting, minimalism, and headedness (Chomsky) in a finite space for language learning.

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