

authors from achieving their original intention. Only those who have some familiarity with current linguistic theory and psychology are able to follow and evaluate the reasoning put forward. Other readers can either skim the technicalities or run to the nearest university to take an accelerated course in Linguistics. Both

options are quite inappropriate, but the thing is that this book deserves more than just being read: it must be understood and, hence, enjoyed as a whole.

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Alessandro DURANTI, *Linguistic anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997. xxi + 398 pages.

*Linguistic anthropology* is a welcome textbook that focuses on the cultural importance of language and speaking, that is, it studies language as part and parcel of our lives. The insightful ethnographic approach to linguistic fieldwork provided by the book is really appealing and extremely useful to anyone interested in carrying out research in first and second language acquisition. Divided into ten chapters, the first three are devoted to theoretical issues, whereas chapters four and five focus on how to carry out effective fieldwork. Chapters six, seven, and eight present different trends within the field of Linguistic Anthropology in the last decades. Finally, in chapter nine, Duranti develops his interest in the role of participants in speech events, which is followed by his conclusions summarized in chapter ten.

On the whole, the book is well written, clear and neatly organized. Perhaps the only exception is the discussion of certain theoretical concepts which are complex due to their multiple meanings. For example, the terms 'culture', 'linguistic relativity' and 'speech community' have been differently defined by various authors and, therefore, the reader may find problems when trying to figure out which specific definition the author is referring to.

In the first chapter, Duranti points out that Linguistic Anthropology is

mainly concerned with language use and three theoretical notions, namely performance, indexicality, and participation. Performance has to do with the power of words because words do things as Austin's notion of performative verbs shows. For instance, when a person says (i) "*I promise I'll be good*", the uttering of these words is the act of promising itself. This notion displays a 'creative' and 'dynamic' view of language, which is the one assumed throughout the book. In relation to indexicality, the author mentions Gumperz's concept of 'contextualization cues' which are features of talk (not only linguistic) that contribute to the interpretation of sentences and situations. For instance, intonation of an utterance gives the hearer clues about the meaning that the speaker wants to convey. Thus, the utterance (ii) '*You don't know him*' would be interpreted as a question if spoken with a rising intonation. However, the same utterance pronounced with a falling intonation is an assertion meaning 'you do not know what he is capable of'. Participation takes into account that the participants in linguistic interaction are crucial for its development as a social activity. Therefore, these three concepts are important, but a notion that has been left out is that of context. Context both in the fixed and dynamic sense is also essential for inter-

preting social and linguistic behaviour. Since it is closely linked to the notion of participation, the reader misses its development in the book.

Since Duranti defines language as a 'cultural resource', a whole chapter is devoted to the notion of 'culture', in which several theories of culture are presented. All these theories share an important focus on language as a conceptual and social tool which is a product and an instrument of culture. Duranti manages to make the reader realize how complex the notion of culture is. This chapter is very useful for researchers or students who are not familiar with this term and its diverse implications.

The author also highlights the importance of 'linguistic diversity'. He stresses the fact that formal grammarians have always taken for granted that speech communities are homogeneous whereas Linguistic Anthropology is precisely interested in studying the differences within them. Since diversity is the main point in chapter three, Duranti deals with concepts such as 'variety', Gumperz's 'linguistic repertoire', and different definitions of 'speech community'. When trying to explain 'linguistic diversity', he discusses Whorf's notion of 'linguistic relativity'. It refers to different worldviews responsible for variation among languages. Nevertheless, according to the author, linguistic relativity is not the only issue to examine when studying language in culture; an anthropological study of language should be concerned with language as both a product and a process.

In chapter four, the reader finds a helpful piece of writing about how a linguistic anthropologist should undertake fieldwork. This chapter focuses on the ethnographic principles and methods that may be used by linguistic anthropologists to concentrate on the cultural part of linguistic exchanges. The author successfully illustrates the problems one may encounter when carrying out field-

work with conflicts he himself or other well-known researchers had to face. Linguistic Anthropology uses, on the one hand, methods such as participant-observation, interviews, 'identifying and using the local language(s)' and writing interaction, and, on the other, technological material such as video and tape recorders and digitized images. After this 'theoretical' introduction to fieldwork, chapter five is concerned with the outcome of such practice, namely, transcriptions and other representations of linguistic practices. The main point of this section is that words are important in any transcript but actions should also be present in records of interactions by using different symbols or digitized images and sketches. A problem readers may find is that some of the transcription symbols Duranti uses are not explained for the reader. For example, Duranti presents a system devised by Rudolph Laban to match words with action. Nevertheless, the symbols that represent actions are neither explained nor exemplified.

On the whole, the ethnographic methods and transcription systems described in these two chapters, together with the appendix at the end of the book, which provides the reader with useful tips on recording interaction, should be of great value for both L1 and L2 acquisition researchers. One should note, however, that whereas some of these methods, such as interviews, are widely used in L2 acquisition research, they may not be suitable for research in L1 language acquisition because of the limited mental development of children at the early stages of their language learning process.

Duranti goes on to review grammatical descriptions over the past decades. He focuses on structuralism and analyzes each one of the linguistic subfields to show how systematic grammatical analyses are undertaken. The author develops morphology largely due to its creative

power that makes it substantial for the dynamic view of language assumed here. This development simultaneously highlights the importance of use in the organization of grammatical systems.

Pragmatic approaches to language, performance, and the power of words are also discussed in the book. 'Speech Act Theory', the first pragmatic approach taken up by Duranti, is a theory developed by Austin and Searle. This model states that words not only describe the world but can also change it. This view is excellently exemplified by Austin's 'performative verbs'. The basic tenets of Speech Act Theory are followed by a critique of some of its key concepts such as truth, intentions and 'speaker as a social actor'. Duranti succeeds in proving the culture-specific nature of these concepts by referring to an ethnographic work carried out in a community in the Philippines. A discussion of Wittgenstein's notion of 'language game' as part of larger activities is included to provide more evidence against the universality of these concepts but Duranti does not manage to make a clear point. Then, 'Conversation Analysis', a field that studies the structure of talk, is discussed. The author points out that linguistic anthropologists do not generally make use of Conversation Analysis because it is primarily interested in 'conversational sequences' whereas Linguistic Anthropology is more concerned with 'social actors'.

Due to the importance of participants in linguistic interactions, Duranti dedicates a chapter to discussing this issue. His treatment of participants and his discussion draw from Goffman's analysis of talk from the point of view not only of the speaker and the hearer but also of any person present during the exchange. Therefore, he calls all these people 'participants'. Thus, Duranti concludes that if participants and the place and time where and when interactions take place seem to be crucial for an analysis of talk,

we should analyze something more than just words. With such a conclusion, The author here seems to suggest that Conversation Analysis on its own is not very suitable for linguistic anthropological studies because it just focuses on structure. However, the combination of both Conversation Analysis and ethnographic methods would be a good way to undertake linguistic anthropological research, if the analysis does not impose the researcher's point of view.

Chapter ten provides unity to the book. Duranti's general view of Linguistic Anthropology is clearly shown in the following quotation:

"From the view of language as a system of classification, a window on mental reality and hence an instrument for the study of culture as a system of knowledge, linguistic anthropologists have been moving toward a notion of language as an aggregate of features, tendencies, and acts that are sometimes the background and other times the foreground for the constitution of the social world in which we live" (Duranti, 1997: 338).

This textbook is addressed to sociolinguistic, pragmatic and anthropological students interested in both First and Second Language Acquisition. No doubt, it will be useful for these readers as well as for researchers of disciplines other than Linguistic Anthropology eager to enter this field of study. This book is highly recommended to people who want to understand why we say what we say in given situations and how we can change the world by using our species-specific feature called language.

### Reference

- GOFFMAN, E. (1981). *Forms of talk*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

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