

○ **K. ALLAN, J. BRADSHAW, G. FINCH, K. BURRIDGE & G. HEYDON, *THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS COMPANION***
(LONDON, PALGRAVE MACMILLAN. 2010. PP. XVII, 366)

Review by Kathleen Heugh, Research Centre for Languages and Cultures, University of South Australia; Linguistics Department, University of the Western Cape; and the Human Sciences Research Council of South Africa.

In the contemporary world of increasing access to and use of electronic media, it is comforting to have access to a volume which one may consult for easy reference to linguistics, with particular reference to the English language. This volume, authored by Keith Allan, Julie Bradshaw, Geoffrey Finch, Kate BurrIDGE and Georgina Heydon, is ostensibly pitched towards ‘beginning undergraduate’ or final year (secondary school) students. Yet, it is likely to be welcomed by a wider cohort of readers with an interest in the English language and linguistics.

The authors have compiled material in the following categories:

- studying language, which includes sections on phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics, discourse, stylistics, and a range of branches of linguistics (including: socio-, psycho-, applied, historical and corpus linguistics);
- key terms and concepts in linguistics;
- key linguists;
- a brief introduction to research in the various sub-fields of linguistics; and
- possible career pathways for students of linguistics.

This structure, complemented by simple but skillful layout, offers the reader swift and easy access to essential, user-friendly information. So I began to read this volume with much enthusiasm, anticipating the kind of text I should like to recommend to students and colleagues.

Compiling a single volume which covers a rather large field is daunting and difficult decisions have to be made in regard to inclusions and omissions. There are after all several recent multi-volume texts such as the second edition of the Elsevier Science (2006) *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* and the new Blackwell *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* (Chapelle, in press) which attempt to cover the terrain more comprehensively, so the reader

anticipates gaps in a single volume which introduces both the field of linguistics and the English language. It is therefore important to signal to the reader a sense of the criteria and methodology used for selecting, categorising and sequencing entries in a single volume.

The two largest sections of the volume are concerned with studying language and with key terms and concepts in linguistics. While several theoretical perspectives of linguistics are given attention – for example, Noam Chomsky's generative grammar – the selection of linguistic features and items discussed shows the influence of systemic functional linguistics (or grammar) and of this theoretical view for the study of language (English). A systemic functional view of text had its early genesis in the exploratory linguistics of the Prague School (pre-World War II), and is associated with the work of Michael Halliday who developed this into systemic functional grammar (SFG). Although British, Halliday spent some of his most influential years in Australia and his work has permeated much of Australian Applied Linguistics, particularly as this relates to the teaching of English. For this reason, the volume is likely to be of significant interest to linguists and English second language specialists, teachers, trainers and scholars in Australia and other contexts where SFG has most cachet. However, for those who are more concerned with a wider overview of the range of theoretical considerations in linguistics, this is probably not going to be a 'one-stop' text.

The compilation of this volume has undoubtedly been an ambitious exercise and some of the sections would have benefitted from tighter conceptualisation, planning, editing and categorising of entries. The different branches of linguistics – sociolinguistics, applied linguistics, psycholinguistics etc. – are listed as core topics in the study of general linguistics in the same way as are phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax etc. However, they really ought to be discussed as significant fields of study rather than misclassified as 'topics' of study. The detailed table of contents, is extremely useful for quick referencing, however, it also draws attention to what appears to be some fairly arbitrary decisions about what to include and how to sequence entries. For example, while it may be common in Australia to include second language acquisition (SLA) under applied linguistics and first language acquisition under psycholinguistics, this is not logical. SLA, interlanguage and discussions of language processing (omitted in this volume) may be considered to be more cognate with psycholinguistics. They also do have direct relevance to the teaching of foreign and second languages, just as neurolinguistics and other areas of cognitive linguistics have. Admittedly, there is some debate amongst applied linguists who have sought to distance themselves from earlier behaviourist theory within psycholinguistics, while simultaneously hoping to be associated with SLA. Nevertheless, if one takes a close look at the contemporary research on various aspects of SLA, for example in the Blackwell *Handbook of Second Language*

Acquisition (Doughty & Long, 2005), it is clear that SLA has its roots in psycholinguistics. This does not however mean that contemporary SLA research is immune to the social context of language acquisition; rather the reverse is increasingly apparent. Thus it is becoming evident that the boundaries amongst the different branches of linguistics are porous, if not anachronistic. What this volume does, unintentionally, is to demonstrate to linguists that such divisions warrant a debate about whether or not they continue to be relevant.

There appear also to be arbitrary decisions about what to include or omit from certain fields within the volume. For example, under applied linguistics, although translation appears, there is no mention of human language technology nor is there a parallel entry for interpreting. While 'immersion' is included as the only entry on bilingual models of language teaching, this discussion is not linked to bilingual education and there are no parallel entries for 'submersion', early-exit/transitional/subtractive models or programs. Nor are there entries for additive bilingual or multilingual models, which are alternatives to immersion. Given the significance of the work of Jim Cummins, however controversial he may be, the chapters on psycholinguistics and discussions of second language acquisition require some mention of this scholar, as they do also of Vygotsky. Although there is an entry for foreign language teaching there is no explicit one for second language teaching. Literacy is mentioned in passing, but there is no dedicated discussion of literacy/ies, critical literacy, and new literacies' studies, which have become matters of considerable significance in applied linguistics, sociolinguistics and research in these two areas over the last two decades. The discussion of sociolinguistics also requires at least some reference to linguistic diversity, language policy and language planning; and possibly status, corpus and acquisition planning.

The sequencing of sub-entries often appears haphazard. For example, under sociolinguistics, one might have expected that an entry on 'sexist language' be followed by a cognate entry on 'language, gender and sexuality' rather than separated by one on 'critical discourse analysis'. The issue of sequencing and the apparently arbitrary classification of entries is also present in the fifth section, 'conducting research and identifying resources'; for example, the entries which are listed as 'researching psycholinguistics' and 'researching cognitive linguistics' are separated by 'researching applied linguistics', and so on. Such matters of sequencing might be easily tidied in a revised edition.

Given the scale of the language teaching industry, especially the second language teaching industry at an international level, one would have expected a fairly extensive section on researching applied linguistics. The opportunities for research in foreign language teaching, bilingual and multilingual teaching/education; materials production and evaluation; course design; curriculum development and assessment, interpreting etc., probably deserve some

mention beyond the rather limited inclusion of SLA and translation. Similar comments might be made of crucial areas of research missing under other areas, for example, under the entry for researching sociolinguistics.

What I particularly found useful in this volume is the inclusion of the last two sections on areas of research and possible career paths for students. All too often the study of linguistics is hampered by a failure to point students towards creative and fascinating avenues for research or careers, for example in translation and interpreting, and forensic linguistics. This volume therefore makes a positive contribution towards attracting students to the field and may encourage teachers to continue research in their own areas of interest.

While the second part of this review appears to be critical, the comments offer considerations for a revised edition of what is ultimately a useful single volume compendium for beginning students of linguistics. So would I recommend this to my students? Yes, with some qualifications, which as a teacher-researcher, I would expect to offer in relation to many texts.

REFERENCES

- Chapelle, C. A. (Ed.). (in press). *The encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd.
- Doughty, C. J. & Long, M. H. (Eds.). (2005). *Handbook of second language acquisition*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Elsevier Science. (2006). *Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics* (2nd Ed.). Amsterdam: Elsevier Science.