



Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction (Book Review)

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Contemporary Linguistics was initially (First Edition 1989) composed to present an introductory textbook on linguistics to enlighten the students about different areas of linguistics (morphology, phonology, psycholinguistics, semantics, syntax, and sociolinguistics) with the aims to provide up-to-date coverage of the subject areas, and provide a clear and direct presentation of materials for the students of linguistics. In this regard, editors of the book strived to: incorporate up-to-date and comprehensive text; present the knowledge of the subject from working experts on a particular topic; adopt a modular approach to explain complicated concepts in an engaging and digesting style; and offer extensive support to instructors and students to teach and understand the book. The book was warmly welcomed by the students, and well appreciated by the experts in the field of linguistics. As a result, the editors have been charting various developments in the subject through different editions (1-6).

The current edition (7th 2017) of Contemporary Linguistics comprises of 14 chapters. Chapter one previews language and its features. Chapter two discusses the sounds of speech focusing the part of articulators to produce sounds, symbols representing sounds, grouping of sounds into classes, and features of sound. Chapter three reviews the distinctiveness of sounds, and the use of transcription to describe the variation of sounds. Chapter four throws light on word structures explaining different concepts on morphology. Chapter five presents the analysis of sentence structures explaining how words: are categorized; and combined to form phrases and sentences; and how sentence structures are diagrammed. Chapter six describes different concepts of semantics e.g., derivation of meaning, contribution of speaker's attitude and belief, context, and setting toward meaning. Chapter seven explains how different languages are classified based on morphological, phonological, and syntactic similarities. Chapter eight discusses: how and why a language and its sounds change over time; and what syntactic and morphological changes are noticed in a language. Chapters nine and 10 explain how children acquire first and second language by developing vocabulary in different stages of acquisition, and what factors influence the acquisition process. Chapter 11 answers the questions related to the: methods employed by psycholinguists to study language processing; linguistic principles involved in language production and comprehension; and psycholinguistic models applied to explain language processing. Entitled 'Brain and Language' chapter 12 describes the structure of human brain and its relation with language, and neurolinguistic investigations on language and brain. Chapter 13 explains the use of language in social contexts focusing on how: class, ethnicity, gender and place influence language variation; dialect variation takes place over time; language contact influences development and use of language; social interaction influences the use of language; and people deal with language. Chapter 14 explains the development of writing systems, the emergence of alphabetical systems, the development of writing systems in non-European languages, the development of modern English spelling system, and the relation between reading and writing.

Each chapter of the textbook starts with a quote from world-famous literary works followed by the chapter objectives, a detailed overview of the topic, and ends in a chapter summary, key terms, recommended reading, and exercises. Quotes (at the start of every chapter) are very concise and exciting, and present a very appealing introduction of the topic. Chapter objectives comprise of short statements that present an easily understandable aim of the particular topic. A detailed overview of the topic provides a comprehensive discussion of different aspects of the specific topic. Chapter summary (titled 'Summing Up') presents a precise summary of the discussion on a specific topic, and makes it easy for the reader the digest the essence of the discussion. 'Recommended Reading' section provides references to the materials for further reading on the topic. Exercises, at the end of every chapter, are also very interesting and help to assess readers' comprehension of the topic.

The current edition is very advantageous for several reasons such as it: presents revised content on four chapters (2, 3, 4, and 5) on phonetics, phonology, morphology, and syntax; updates two additional chapters 'Second Language Acquisition', and 'Language in Social Contexts' with the aim to incorporate the recent scholarship in the field; provides LaunchPad Solo that offers features (interactive exercises, advanced questions, interactive IPA audio charts, additional reviews on core topics, further exploration of four chapters); provides study guide of the book; presents 'Instructor's Resource Manual' as a teaching guide for the teachers of the textbook; gives detailed and advanced information on the subject; provides online exercises to support multimedia technology in the classroom; and reflects recent research on linguistics. Important boxes like 'Language Matters' (present general knowledge on specific topics) and 'For the Student Linguist' are the plus of the textbook that is rarely found in any other textbook of linguistics.



To be brief, *Contemporary Linguistics* is a wonderful textbook that features valuable and unique things that further make it a 'springboard to the realm of scientific analysis', and 'a greater appreciation for the wonder of human language, the variety and complexity of its structure, and the subtlety of its use' (Preface, p. xiv).

About Book

Contemporary Linguistics: An Introduction (7th Edition). Edited by William O'Grady, John Archibald, Mark Aronoff and Janie Rees-Miller. Boston and New York: Bedford/St. Martin's Macmillan Learning, 2017, p. 674, 35.99\$ (Paperback), ISBN: 978-1-319-03977-6.

Bio-notes

Muhammad Ahmad joined Punjab Government School Education Department after receiving a Master's degree in English from the University of Education, Lahore, Pakistan in 2008. After that, he completed his MS (English Linguistics) degree at Lahore Leads University, Lahore, Pakistan and started teaching as a Visiting Lecturer in English at the University of Education, Okara (2015-2018). Currently, he is working as SSE English at Government High School, Hujra Shah Muqem, Okara, Pakistan. He is also a PhD candidate at the Department of Applied Linguistics, Government College University, Faisalabad, Pakistan. He has published a number of articles in national and international journals. In addition, he has co-edited a book titled: *Reflection - Linguistics Treatises*. He is the Chief Editor of *Discourse Studies Forum*. He is also listed on the Editorial Board for *Reading & Writing* journal.

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