

Paulston, C. B. & Tucker, G. R. (eds.) *Sociolinguistics: The Essential Readings*. USA: Blackwell, 2003. Pp xviii, 502.

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Sociolinguistics, as it is broadly defined as “the study of language in its social contexts and the study of social life through linguistics” (Coupland & Jaworski, 1997:1), turns out to be a very lively and popular field of study. An evidence for its popularity is that introductory textbooks and collections of original readings kept appearing on the desks of sociolinguistics students. For the former we have, among others, Holmes 1992, Msthrrie et.al. 2000, Romaine 2000, and Wardhaugh 2002 (p.xiv). For the latter, we have Coupland & Jaworski 1997 at least. The introductory textbooks, which can serve as a second-hand synopsis of classic seminal work in the field, often cannot satisfy curious students who feel it compulsory to do first-hand reading of the original work of the influential authors.

Sociolinguistics: The Essential Readings comes to satisfy the curious students. As is suggested in the title, the 29 extracts this reader presents are essential readings, essential not in the sense that the readings are original seminal articles from influential authors (though in fact they are, and indeed some other readers may also be the case), but that they cover a variety of topics that form the discipline of sociolinguistics. What’s more, the selections relating to each topic are researches themselves. For example, with reference to History of Sociolinguistics, the first topic heading of the reader, the editors present two extracts which are researches themselves for the genesis or origin of sociolinguistics rather than mere accounts of its chronological development. Roger W. Shuy explores the ancestor of sociolinguistics in terms of linguistics, anthropology, sociology, and linguistic geography. Louis-Jean Calvet reflects on the origins of sociolinguistics in France and in the former Soviet Union. Paulston and Tucker, in their editorial introduction to Part I, highlights the reasons for the origin of sociolinguistics, one of which is that “the field appears to have emerged partially in response to a number of well-articulated and compelling social issues” (p.2). According to them, sociolinguistics appears in America as a natural outcome of the

movement of social justice, and the post-colonial sensibility also informs Calvet's essay.

Ethnography of speaking, also referred to as ways of speaking, almost occupies space of every volume titled as sociolinguistics. This reader is no exception. Under this topic heading, Part II presents Dell Hymes' article "Models of the interaction of language and social life", in which a descriptive theory is being developed in order to work out the components of communicative competence. Hymes intends that these components can be identified, examined and analyzed just as the components of the structure of the language. In so doing, Hymes attempts to overcome Chomsky's abstract system of language and considers the social factors in language use, but he is still confined to the language ideology of mainstream linguistics. Hymes is too ideal to see that speech act intension does not necessarily match surface form. As Schiffrin (1994:185) puts out, knowledge of these structures and functions is only part of our communicative competence. The ways that we organize and conduct our lives through language are ways of being and doing that are not only relative to other possibilities for communicating, but also deeply embedded within the particular framework by which we ---- as members of our own specific communities ---- make sense out of experience. Despite this limitation of ethnography of speaking, Hymes' work triggers various thoughts. Valentina Pagliai's "Lands I came to sing" in this part is an article that furthers his work, and pragmatic studies and gender studies, as headings of Part III and Part IV respectively, are schools that may have resulted from ethnographic approach to communication (p.28). Pragmatics is not included in Coupland & Jaworski's sociolinguistics reader (1997), but it occupies the largest space of this reader with six articles: three addressing narratives, one addressing conversation, and two politeness. Roger Brown and Albert Gilman's "The pronoun of power and solidarity" is a much cited article, and its inclusion in the part of pragmatics will be of convenience for students who are interested in power study. As for the topic of language and gender, the editors presents a selection from Robin Lakoff's *Language and Women's Place*, and an extract from *Gender and Discourse* by Deborah Tannen.

Part V, Language and Variation, best resembles the editors' editing principle stated in Preface. In this part, one hard-to-find early work and two up-to-date researches are put together addressing this indispensable topic of sociolinguistics. William Labov's "Some sociolinguistic principles,"

where he spells out some of his working principles, was first published in 1969. It is followed by Walt Wolfram's "On the construction of vernacular dialect norms" and Barbara Johnstone's "The linguistic individual in an American public-opinion survey," which are first published in 2000 and 1991 respectively. By this way of arrangement, together with the discussion questions at the end of each part, the editors have provided students with a fuller picture of the progress of the discipline and provoke their own thinking.

The following part, Pidgins and Creoles, only presents one classic study on the sociological aspects of creole language, John E. Reinecke's "Trade jargons and creole dialects as marginal languages." But, as the editors point out (p.289), there is a considerable literature on pidgins and creoles, which discusses issues like, among others, language education and language planning. The three selections in Part X contribute to the topic of language policy and planning, and the two selections in Part XI contribute to the issue of multilingualism, policies and education.

Parts VII, VIII, and IX are devoted to the sociolinguistic situation of bilingualism and multilingualism, but each part has its own emphasis. The three articles under the heading of individual bilingualism focus on the education of bilingual individuals as the editors believe that "bilingualism or multilingualism and innovative approaches to education which involve the use of two or more languages constitute the normal everyday experience" (p.301). This psychological emphasis on bilingualism shifts to the sociological literature of bilingualism in Part VIII, Diglossia. In this part, students can read Charles Ferguson's classic which was published in 1959. They can also read Joshua Fishman's "Bilingualism with and without diglossia; diglossia with and without bilingualism" published in 1967. In "Toward the systematic study of diglossia" published in 1991, students may read Alan Hudson's review of Ferguson's concept of diglossia and Fishman's treatment of diglossia and its impact, as well as Hudson's working definition. As for group multilingualism, the two articles in Part IX concern with the question of whether the coexistence of many languages was likely to lead to strife and internal crisis. Joshua Fishman's article, "Empirical explorations of two popular assumptions," demonstrates that it is not the multilingualism that causes civil strife. Paulston's article, "Linguistic minorities and language policies," discusses language as a social resource which is available to ethnic groups in their

competition for access to the goods and services of a nation.

Apart from the above mentioned feature of topic centered, the editorial introduction is also worth special comment. Every part begins with such an introduction, and it does not merely summarize the selections in the corresponding part. With comment on and criticism of the classic works, the editorial introduction serves as a text that presents the editors' own understanding of sociolinguistics and illustrates important concepts concerned. If the above mentioned introduction to History of Sociolinguistics is an example of the editors' orientation, then the introduction to Part VIII can be seen to have provided students with a clearer illustration of the concept of diglossia. The editors do not only provide a history of the term, but also remind the students of the disagreement and confusion about the meaning of diglossia.

A word for the things to be desired. As sociolinguistics is also the study of social life through language, essential readings of sociolinguistics is to include readings from critical discourse analysis. In the latest 20 years of the half-century development of sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis produces abundant volumes concerning theory and method, and there are already authors who consider critical discourse analysis as a part of a broadly conceived sociolinguistics (e.g. Fairclough, 2000). The editors have made an attempt in Part I by choosing an article addressing the critical theory in the continent, but they have not followed the line in their choice of readings in the other parts. If they had, the present reader might be more international and have more contributors from outside America.

Reference

- Coupland, N. & Jaworski, A. (Eds.) 1997. *Sociolinguistics: A reader and Coursebook*. London: Macmillan.
- Fairclough, N. 2000. Discourse, social theory, and social research: the discourse of welfare reform. *Journal of sociolinguistics*, 4/2, 163-195.
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