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Discourse and Context in Language Teaching: A Guide for Language Teachers by Marianne Celce-Murcia and Elite Olshtain Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, viii+279 pp.

Reviewed by Elissa Ikeda
University of California, Los Angeles

This new book by Marianne Celce-Murcia and Elite Olshtain offers valuable information and pedagogical suggestions for any language teacher or trainer of teachers. The focus is on the role of discourse in language teaching: how to prepare learners for communicative interaction (written and spoken) by exposure to authentic language use and a focus on "the social and cultural environment within which communicative language processing and interaction take place" (p. 190). I recommend the book to novice and experienced teachers who wonder how to incorporate research in applied linguistics into their language classroom. At the same time, I think it should yield even better results in a methods class where group discussion can allow for even greater absorption of and interaction with the material.

Underlying the text is the philosophy that language must be taught at the discourse level in order to produce learners who can communicate effectively in the target language. As with many others who espouse a communicative teaching approach, Celce-Murcia and Olshtain appeal to the model of communicative competence put forth by Canale and Swain (Canale 1983; Canale & Swain, 1980). The authors argue that language must be taught in relation to discourse and pragmatic considerations. As an example of this, the authors cite the following: At sentence level, in which an analysis does not distinguish between word order choices for separable phrasal verbs, the sentences *Edward gave up his reward* and *Edward gave his reward up* are equivalent. Analysis at the discourse level, however, demonstrates that the word order choice hinges on the desired emphasis and newness of the direct object in the context in which it appears (p. 56).

Another issue of central importance is the schema for language knowledge and discourse processing promoted in the book. The authors emphasize that effective interpretation and production of written and spoken discourse involve a combination of both top-down and bottom-up processing. As a result, diagrams and examples in each chapter relate both types of processing to the specific types of knowledge or processing skills being discussed, as well as to each other. In the production of spoken discourse, for instance, speakers draw on their knowledge of phonology, syntax, and vocabulary (bottom-up processing) as well as knowledge of the participants and sociocultural rules of appropriacy (top-down processing). Indeed, the book's content and organization are built on the assumption that effec-

tive language users rely on a combination of knowledge components and processing skills.

The book is divided into four sections. In the first section, the authors provide background to discourse analysis and pragmatics. While the second section focuses on language knowledge (phonology, grammar, and vocabulary), the third section is devoted to the four language processing skills (listening, reading, writing, and speaking). Each of the chapters in these two sections describes problems that language learners often face as a result of discourse-level language phenomena. In addition, there are valuable suggestions for how these problematic areas can be addressed in the language classroom. The reader will be happy to find that these recommendations cover a range of age and proficiency levels.

One of the questions that came to my mind as I read the book was how to incorporate so many teaching suggestions into a manageable course design. The final section, entitled "Implementation," offers a helpful answer. The section includes a chapter on curriculum design and materials development that provides a framework for developing a discourse-based curriculum integrated with traditional approaches to curriculum design (product-based, content-based, strategy-based, and process-based). The authors specify that while these approaches may be integrated, a discourse-based curriculum will necessarily include "a focus on authentic texts and interactional communicative events in language use" (p. 190). Although designing a curriculum still looms as a daunting task, this chapter provides a way to develop the discussion in previous chapters into a well-designed curriculum.

The other chapters in the final section discuss the importance of and insightful proposals for a discourse approach to both assessment and training for teachers and learners. The assessment chapter is guestauthored by Elana Shohamy, and includes reference to specific discourse research enlightening to both testers and teachers. Shohamy describes an alternative—discourse-based—assessment battery that was used with great success with immigrant children studying Hebrew in Israel (p. 212). In the training chapter, the authors discuss the importance of training teachers (a) to be aware of discourse analysis, (b) to provide discourse-sensitive feedback and correction, and (c) to reflect on the discourse that they use in their own teaching. Moreover, there are innovative ideas for training learners to analyze discourse in order to further their own learning.

Coming to this text with no background in discourse analysis, I found the book's readability to be its greatest virtue. Detailed explanations and clear examples drawn from authentic language as well as actual teaching experience contribute to the accessibility of the reading. Moreover, the glossary at the end of the book includes a comprehensive review of technical terms ranging from *syntax* to *politeness principle*. These features work together to make the field of discourse analysis accessible to language teachers and teacher trainers with little or no prior background in the field. For readers approaching the text in a discussion group or methods class, the challenging questions and suggested activities included at the

end of each chapter allow for hands-on interaction with the material.

The book is especially well suited for teachers of English (EFL/ESL/EAL), and indeed almost all of the examples are based on English discourse and research related to English learning. This means, however, that teachers of other languages will have to do their own homework on problematic features that appear at the discourse level of the languages they teach. Still, the principles and suggestions elaborated in the handbook are relevant to many language situations. In the UCLA graduate seminar in which I encountered the text, two of the participants in the seminar were currently teaching different levels of Japanese at UCLA, while another was teaching beginning Chinese to heritage learners. These students were able to apply a discourse-based approach to the teaching of Japanese personal reference terms, to backchannels in Japanese discourse, and to the assessment of Chinese language learners. Thus, teachers of languages other than English should be prepared to put in some extra effort to apply the book's suggestions to their own situations.

Overall, however, the textbook promises to be worthwhile reading for all teachers interested in a communicative language teaching approach, and I believe that all readers should gain from the insight and experience that Marianne Celce-Murcia and Elite Olshtain bring to discourse-based language teaching. For this reason, I highly recommend the book.

REFERENCES

Canale, M. (1983). From communicative competence to communicative language pedagogy. In J. Richards & R. Schmidt (Eds.), *Language and communication* (pp. 2-27). London: Longman.

Canale, M., & Swain M. (1980). Theoretical bases of communicative approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics, 1*, 1-48.