

The Study of Language (3rd ed.) by George Yule. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, x+273 pp.

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The third edition of the highly influential and widely used introductory text on linguistics, *The Study of Language*, offers a comprehensive understanding of how language works. With an updated overview of studies of language, it presents a wide variety of issues that involve both the form and function of language. The scope of topics includes linguistic aspects of language such as its phonological, morphological, and syntactic structures, as well as pragmatic and conversational practices. Furthermore, Yule addresses emerging issues in the field with respect to language acquisition, language change, and language variation.

The text contains twenty chapters. Chapters 1 through 3 introduce basic concepts to understand human language with discussions on its origin and development. Chapters 3 and 4 present the sound system of language, in which a concise overview of phonetics and phonology is provided. Based on the discussion of word-formation processes provided by chapter 6, the author addresses the morphological structure of language in chapter 7. In this chapter, the author draws examples from languages other than English in order to promote understanding of morphological rules. Chapters 8 and 9 focus on grammar and syntax. The author first discusses familiar concepts such as parts of speech and agreement before introducing symbols and rules used for syntactic description of language (e.g. transformational rules).

Chapters 10 and 11 survey semantics and pragmatics respectively. The discussion develops from conceptual meanings of words and sentences to contextual understandings of the speakers' communicative intentions. Chapter 12 introduces discourse analysis and shows how language is used in both written and spoken discourse. In the following chapter, the author discusses the relationship between language and the brain. He explicates how slips of the tongue/ear and aphasia occur with reference to different parts of the brain. The concept of critical period is also introduced in relation to the lateralization of the brain. Chapters 14 and 15 present developmental stages and issues in first and second language acquisition (SLA). With respect to SLA, the author introduces different instructional methods including the grammar-translation, audiolingual, and communicative approaches. In chapter 16, the author surveys types of gestures and sign languages; focusing on the American Sign Language, he discusses the structure and meaning of signs.

Chapter 17 is on language history and diachronic variation. Upon a brief overview of Old and Middle English, the author explicates the process of language change in terms of its sound, structure, and meaning. Finally, the last three chapters

are devoted to synchronic variation in language, and they discuss language with regard to regional, social, and cultural variation. Chapter 18 begins with discussions on accent and dialect, and addresses issues in bilingualism and language planning. Chapter 19 introduces sociolinguistics and shows how the use of language (e.g., speech style, register, jargon, etc.) functions as a social marker. In the last chapter, the author introduces the concept of linguistic relativity and examines how classifiers, address terms, and gendered speech are used differently in different languages and cultures.

The Study of Language achieves its objectives as an accessible introductory text in linguistics. With the addition of discussions on contemporary issues in the field such as the study of gesture and the social and cultural variation in language, this new edition of the book stands robust as one of the most comprehensive survey texts. In addition to introducing extensive topics in linguistics, the clear layout of the book makes it reader-friendly. The author introduces each chapter with a brief overview, often in relation to the topics presented in the preceding chapters. Such an overview helps the reader to approach each topic against the backdrop of the larger context. Furthermore, with its target readers in mind, the discussion develops from general and familiar concepts to field specific ones within and across chapters.

Given that the text will be used in introductory courses in linguistics, another strength of the book is the supplemental materials provided at the end of each chapter. “Study questions,” “Research tasks,” “Discussion topics/projects,” and “Further reading” provide readers with opportunities not only to check their knowledge, but also to apply their knowledge and develop ideas for further research. The updated glossary and bibliography are also in line with such a purpose.

While the text covers a wide range of topics with accessible language and length, there are some shortcomings. As with many survey texts, *The Study of Language* offers a much simplified understanding of the field. Each chapter provides little more than explanations of basic terms and concepts of different sub-fields in linguistics. Considering the complex nature of language and linguistic research, this can be misleading to its readers. Additionally, despite the author’s attempt to use examples from various languages, the majority of examples are drawn from English. For native English speakers in particular, more linguistic examples from languages other than English would be beneficial and it would allow newcomers to the field of linguistics to take an analytic perspective towards the study of language.

Despite these drawbacks, *The Study of Language* serves as an excellent text for beginners in linguistics. It covers an extensive range of topics, and addresses both long-standing and emerging issues in the field. Furthermore, it challenges its readers with insightful discussion questions for each topic. Along with supplemental readings, the book would be an invaluable resource in any introductory courses on language and linguistics.