

Siobhan Chapman and Christopher Routledge (eds.), *Key Thinkers in Linguistics and the Philosophy of Language*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2005, Pp. xii + 281.

I suppose no single volume can cover all key linguists or language philosophers. The key authorities for a subject like linguistics vary according to the viewpoint and particular research interest one pursues. It is arguable that this compilation lacks information on contemporary key linguists such as Joan Bybee, Wallace Chafe, T. Givon, Janet Holmes, Dell Hymes, Gunther Kress, Robin Tolmach Lakoff, Marianne Mithun, Neil Smith and Moira Yip. Each of these linguists provides first hand information on one or more areas of language studies such as grammaticalization, consciousness and language, language and contexts, dyadic interaction and gender, communicative competence, multimodalities in language, language use and politeness, grammars of native American languages, language development in savant, tone and reduplication, among other domains.

There are 80 entries in this volume, which include current prominent linguistic and philosophical figures such as Noam Chomsky, Jerry Fodor, Michael Halliday, William Labov, John Sinclair, and Hilary Putnam. Some of the deceased linguists and language philosophers whose works are cited in the publications of current linguistic journals are Mikhail Bakhtin, Leonard Bloomfield, Ferdinand de Saussure, Jacques Derrida, J.R. Firth, Joseph Greenberg, H.P. Grice, Roman Jakobson, W.V. O. Quine, Edward Sapir, Benjamin Lee Whorf and Ludwig Wittgenstein. Out of the 80 entries only four women appear in the collection, namely Deborah Cameron, Julia Kristeva, Lesley Milroy and Deborah Tannen.

In the Preface, the editors inform us that these are thinkers, selected from the Western tradition, whose work can be traced in twenty-first-century thinking about language, in all the disciplines of linguistics and the philosophy of language (p. ix). It is also pointed out that the entries in the collection offer a summary of work rather than a critique or novel interpretation. The intention of the editors is to promote further interest in the contributions of the selected

thinkers and the editors hope that readers will be motivated to seek more details on the ideas represented in this volume (p. x).

There are 30 contributors for this volume. Experts from Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, France, Germany, Holland, Israel, and Switzerland have each contributed an entry to the volume. Two entries came from Italy and American specialists contributed seven, and the remaining twelve entries from United Kingdom. The length of the entries ranges from more than seven pages for *Roman Jakobson* (p. 139-146), more than six pages for *Aristotle* (p. 1-7) to three pages for *Harvey Sacks* (p. 235-237), two pages for *Franz Bopp* (p. 42-43), and merely a page for *Bronislaw Malinowski* (p. 186-187).

This leaves one to wonder if there is a degree of importance behind the differentiated entries in relation to content. There is no specific categorisation, except for the alphabetical order of the 80 entries. Implicitly, one may conclude that the difference between philosophy of language and linguistics is not intended as an obvious division by the editors.

In the realm of key language philosophers two of the important disciplines that have major influences on the concept of language as a communicative instrument are psychology and theatre. Contemporary thinkers in the realm of cognitive psychology such as Steven Pinker and Howard Gardner can be considered important thinkers of language and social interaction, especially in the area of human evolution and education, yet no entry from these thinkers appears in this collection.

Worth mentioning, Peter Brook, a prominent theatre director, is an important thinker of language in terms of stage performance. Brook sees the importance of (nonsensical) sounds as a semantic principle to project universal meanings against specific cultural impediments in a particular language landscape (Martin 1991: 78). In his search for the universal language of theatre and the wellspring of drama, Brook looks for the capacity to communicate the invisible dimensions of experience in all cultures beyond the Babel of

cultures. Consequently, silence becomes a meaningful unit (Brook's conversation cited in Colin Counsell 1996: 146):

“A *real* silence contains potentially everything. And it's not for nothing that for instance, the whole of Zen thinking, continually comes back to emptiness as the root out of which anything, can come. And that's why, for me, the theatre starts and ends within a bowl of emptiness, which is an empty space and a great silence.”

Language, in the Kristevian lens, does not exist as isolated grammatical formations. My inclusion of theatre directors like Brook here is to show that language contributors need not be linguists alone. The use of language is quite crucial to the discourse of performing arts. Directors play up language (or the lack of it) on stage to communicate feelings that even the applied linguists might not realise. Readers will find Brook's preoccupation with language as a medium of communication in line with the notion of language as a dynamic and heterogeneous process *a la* Julia Kristeva (see below).

The misconception represented in many books that language is the crux of communication is most glaring in the busker festivals. In an event like interactive street performance, little linguistic intelligence is needed as the audience imitate the kinesthetic strategies introduced by the buskers. The whole idea is to project conceptual difference amidst cognitive routine (Sew 2007). Interactivity in the oral tradition, such as in busker's performances, captures rich, spontaneous communication. In fact, the oral tradition in cultural ceremonies like traditional Chinese and Malay weddings become important manifestations of language as a semiotic system (Sew 2006).

The remainder of this review highlights the contributions of the minority in this volume, i.e., the four female thinkers. The entry on *Deborah Cameron*, written by Ingrid Piller, holds information on the significance of Cameron's *Feminism and Linguistic Theory*

as a foundation text for post-structural approaches to language and gender (p. 49). Cameron advocates that language is the reason behind gender identity as linguistic practices disadvantage groups of speakers, hence the need to challenge stereotypical pragmatics. Cameron's recent work on sexuality and speech styles escapes this entry (Cameron and Kullick 2003, see also Cameron 2006)

The entry on *Deborah Tannen* elucidates that Tannen is an exponent of dual-culture that attributes the differences in men's and women's speech to specific communication styles developed separately since youth. Piller informs us that Cameron is critical of Tannen's work, as some of the work fails to account for the differential access to power enjoyed by men and women (p. 260). This entry does not take into consideration another aspect of Tannen's research on communicative poetics, especially the significant resonance of repetition in language use (Tannen 1989).

The entry on *Lesley Milroy*, written by Dominic Watt, highlights Milroy's sociolinguistic research conducted with James Milroy in Belfast based on participant observation over three close-knit working-class communities in the city. By means of a social network model, Milroy's research combined ethnography with rigorous quantitative data analysis methods. Milroy regards this method to be more appropriate than the conventional means such socioeconomic class indices employed by William Labov (who has a four-page entry in the volume) and Peter Trudgill (p. 196).

The entry on *Julie Kristeva* written by Stavroula-Thaleia Kousta is an informative account on the rise of Kristeva in the late sixties, as a different kind of linguist. Kristeva is concerned with the signifying aspect of language as a dynamic semiotic system. Kristeva coins the term *intertextuality* to describe the heterogeneous, polyphonic nature of texts *a la* Bakhtin (p. 167). Kristeva propounds that language involves the writing subject, the addressee and the exterior texts organised both horizontally between writer and reader and

vertically between the text and other exterior texts (p. 167-168). Adopting a psychoanalytic standpoint, Kristeva argues that language study, independent of the subject, is impossible and language as a formal system is simply non-existent outside speech (p. 169). Furthermore, Kousta expounds that Kristeva's main concern is to de-objectify language, re-contextualize language in the realm of the social, and view language as a dynamic and heterogeneous process engaged in by speakers.

One can argue that it is also timely to consider another volume on key applied linguists who studied language application in various educational settings and social contexts. Applied language gurus like Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig, Christopher N. Candlin, Guy Cook, Rod Ellis, Shirley Brice Heath, Dorothy Heathcote, Gabriel Kasper, Claire Kramsch, and Alistair Pennycook are among the important figures in the applied language studies.

This collection offers interesting and useful information to readers who would otherwise have to comb through volumes of publications to understand the significance behind the studies conducted by these select language thinkers. This collection is a valuable quick reference that will entice the readers to look for more details on a particular language thinker. Readers who are familiar with popular linguists might find this volume handy in terms of capturing information on other language thinkers who are no less significant and relevant in the philosophy of language and grammar.

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