comes to teaching and expanding grammar, vocabulary and phonology with advanced students. Here a discourse approach promises to make useful contributions to help teachers to become more aware of precisely why such learners remain very non-native-like in their linguistic production. Modality (in grammar), relexicalisation (in vocabulary) and prominence (in phonology) are just three areas that spring to mind after reading McCarthy.

Before finishing, I would like to make a criticism of what is generally a very helpful and practical book. Whereas the book does contain some hints for classroom practice and references to published materials, these are not exemplified in the text. Also, does McCarthy only have knowledge of materials that have been published by the same publisher? Would it not have been more useful for teachers to see examples of a variety of activities from different sources and then helped to assess these in light of the insights discourse analysis throws up? An earlier book for teachers on the same topic by Guy Cook does this much better.

To sum up, this book provides the language teacher with an excellent introduction to what discourse analysis is and its relevance to his or her teaching situation. The thinking practitioner is encouraged to pick and choose what he or she may find useful from the research reported here. The top-down approach suggested by discourse analysis by no means rules out the need to adopt a bottom-up approach with its focus on lexico-grammatical forms when this helps the learner to acquire more linguistic competence. In fact, elsewhere Cook has argued for a place for a focus on form through repetition and learning by heart, and this is thought-provoking coming from a specialist in discourse analysis! Indeed, it is probably true to say that McCarthy himself would seem to be a proponent of a balanced approach to language teaching and learning. We can learn a lot from discourse analysis, but we do not have to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

John Bradbury
Departament de Filologia Anglesa
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

References

COOK, Guy (1989). *Discourse*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
—(1994). «Repetition and learning by heart: an aspect of intimate discourse, and its implications». In *ELT Journal*, Volume 48,2.
COULTHARD, R.M. (1985). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*. London: Longman.
MCCARTHY, M. and O'DELL, F. (1994). *English Vocabulary in Use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
REDMAN, S. and ELLIS, R. (1989). *A Way with Words Book 1*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Suzanne ROMAINE. *Language in Society. An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994. xv +235 pages.

In the preface, Romaine explains why she called her book *language in society* as opposed to *language and society*, this being «to emphasize the fact that the study of society must accord a place to language within it at the same time as the study of language must take account of society.» (p. ix). The underlying message of this work is definitely that while the field of sociolinguistics is a multi-faceted one, no subdivision can be made that does not look at the socio and linguistic as a holistic concept.

The first chapter is an introduction to this idea. In it the terms language and dialect are introduced and lively exam-

ples are given to illustrate how not only linguistic but primarily social criteria must be used to decide what constitutes a language and what a dialect. Indeed the term variety is preferred as it avoids dilemma by definition. Political, cultural and geographical factors are all at play and ultimately might even be the deciding factors over the linguistic. One's language or dialect in the traditional sense are termed as one's regional dialect and indicate the speaker's geographical origin; social dialect or accent tells us what a person's status is within that society, and register reflects what we are doing and where. The notions of speech community and communicative competence are also introduced in this chapter, with the former being defined as «a group of people who do not necessarily share the same language, but share a set of norms and rules for the use of language.» (p. 22) and the latter as «the conventions they share about their speech variety» (p. 22). These conventions refer both to grammatical knowledge and appropriateness of use, which is usually culturally transmitted. The significance of one's culture is stressed here, as is the human trait of classification in order to understand the world we live in. We use language to help us understand basic concepts such as love, work, time and money and thus construct our lives accordingly. The way we classify depends on our culture, on the metaphors we live by and on our belief networks.

In the second chapter, Romaine moves on to language choice in a bilingual or multilingual context. In some cases several languages coexist in relative harmony, in others the marginalisation of minority languages and peoples leads to bitter controversy. It is the author's aim in this chapter to examine the bilingual speaker's reasons for switching or choosing one variety over another. She begins once again by casting doubt on the narrow definitions of mother tongue and home language, terms traditionally used in surveys and censuses where societal bilingualism exists, which usually take the nation-state as a reference point and are carried out, ironically enough, by government bodies. As is made clear from the abstract at the beginning of Chapter 2, taken from Genesis 11: 1-11, multilingualism is still seen as the curse of Babel, something divisive and therefore detrimental to a unified power. While no alternatives are offered to the terminology of these questions, particular insight is made into the way the typical census questions are answered. When asked which is their mother tongue, subjects may, subconsciously or not , choose languages/varieties with which they wish to be identified, be it for prestigious, ethnic, religious, political or other reasons. These same choices are made in everyday life. The author goes on to discuss domains and the individual's use of a particular language according to the given variables; for example interlocutors, place, topic and on a societal level diglossia, where «each language or variety in a multilingual community serves a specialized function and is used for particular purposes.» (p. 45). She explains how, in cases of bilingualism without diglossia, the competition for status as official language and the choices made in everyday life by those who are free to choose, can lead to language shift and ultimately language death. She also looks briefly at code-switching and the variety of reasons for which a speaker may do so.

In the chapter that follows Romaine takes a more in-depth look at language and social class. First, she develops the idea that «urbanization tends to promote linguistic diversity as well as uniformity» (p. 68) with the standard language unifying a diverse population. She then reviews several well known studies on social stratification and linguistic variation, such as post-vocalic /r/ in New York City. The class of the speaker, the amount of

attention paid to speech, accommodation made to the hearer, gender and age, are all factors which have been shown to condition individual variation. Then she touches on social network studies which have grown out of the desire by some researchers not to take for granted that individuals can be necessarily grouped into social classes. This kind of study has shown that a person's socialising habits have a direct effect on the way she/he speaks, and that «an understanding of network structure leads to insight in the process of language shift in a bilingual community.» (p. 83). It is argued that the enforced standardization of a language promotes the class division referred to and ties in with the earlier idea of our need to classify in order to understand the world we live in. After looking at colonisation from the point of view of the European as linguistic imperialist, the author concludes that «To establish a linguistic order is to declare a social order» (p. 95) whereby the literate are empowered with a standard language with which they govern the norms and therefore create vast inequalities.

In Chapter 4 the author turns her attention to some of the research findings related to language and gender. She begins by claiming that the early research done in this field was mistaken in its approach, one which saw women as being different from men, just as in the Bible women are seen as derivative of men. Romaine argues that this received wisdom is reflected in our naming practices and is «symbolic of an order in which men come first» (p. 103). Her angle is that being female or male is not only genetic but learnt too, i.e., we learn through socialization to be what we are. She goes on to look at specific examples of sexist naming language, and offers alternative politically correct terms. This language reform has been criticized and even ridiculed, and frankly some of the suggested terms we see are indeed ridiculous, but what Romaine is advocating here isn't a burn-your-bra type linguistic revolution, but an intelligent transition to a language of equals. She highlights the fact that this transition can only be made if society changes too, and that what must be sought first is a positive self-image among women. She also focuses on single-sex and mixed-sex conversational interaction and provides lively examples from the field of conversational analysis which show us that not only the words we use but the way we speak is culturally determined.

In Chapter 5, the author examines linguistic change and its social motivations. She starts by looking in some detail at the isoglosses separating the Low and High varieties of German, and shows how in a historical sense linguists have long been interested in the development of language, primarily in geographical terms, but that as in the case of the German sound shift all may not be as clear cut as the early studies claimed and that other factors, such as sociolinguistic patterns and time, must be considered. She makes constant reference to the ideas of «change from above and change from below to refer to the differing points of departure for the diffusion of linguistic innovations through the social hierarchy.» (p. 140). For example, a contrast is made between the non-rhotic pronunciation of post-vocalic /r/ in RP British English, a change which originally seems to have come from below, and the rhotic speech now prestigious in the United States among the middle-class which can be seen as a change from above. The diffusion of post-vocalic /r/ in the US and Britain is also given some consideration from a historical and geographical perspective. A brief look is taken at how relatively linguistically innovative men and women are respectively with regard to linguistic change and we see from research findings that it depends very much on the speech com-

munity and networks. Romaine then devotes the rest of the chapter to change in the address system, focusing her attention in particular on the variable and somewhat ambiguous usage of the polite form *ni* in Swedish. The criteria used in Sweden when choosing which form to use being many; age, social class, gender and so on.

Chapter 6 is dedicated to pidgin and Creole languages. As always, the author begins with a loose definition of the terms, being careful not to be prescriptive. We learn that the term creole is usually given to a pidgin which has become nativised, and that a pidgin comes about in situations where speakers of different language backgrounds need to communicate. First, some consideration is given to the distribution of pidgins and creoles, that being mainly in the Third World. Most are based on European languages, that is they draw the bulk of their vocabulary from these languages, which are sometimes referred to as the superstrates. The grammatical structure is usually influenced by the substrates. The name of a pidgin or a creole thus usually indicates their location and their principal lexifier; however these names are often unsatisfactory and not always used by the speakers of these languages themselves. There is a convenient division of the languages into two groups: Pacific and Atlantic. But it is shown that there was some interaction between the two, and that many terms can be found both in Pacific and Atlantic pidgins or creoles. The author then discusses various hypotheses on the origins of pidgins and creoles, and their structure. She talks about the processes of creolisation and decreolisation and introduces the concepts of basilect, mesolect, and acrolect. Finally, she looks at the languages in their social context, and at their overwhelming lack of official status. This seems to be a consequence of the fact that they have not been recognized as languages in their own right, usually because they have not been standardized. But the uses of pidgin and creole languages can be extremely varied, and we see, by virtue of a rather nice poem written in Hawaii Creole English, how the people who speak them are are fiercely proud of them.

The penultimate chapter focuses on some of the language related problems that can arise in school, an institution which endorses largely middle-class language and values. This of course is a problem even for working-class children belonging to the dominant culture, but is an even bigger problem for minority children among whom the rate of failure is considerably greater. Bilingualism has generally been regarded as a problem as we have seen, and this negative attitude has determined the likelihood of failure. Romaine examines and contends the deficit theory, and looks at what happens when there is a mismatch in styles and expectations between child and teacher. She also takes a critical stand to the way testing ignores the needs of minority children. Considerable space is given to the history of court action and subsequent legislation in the United States aimed at rectifying these linguistic inequalities. She contrasts immersion and submersion programs and concludes that the choice is very much a context-dependent one. Finally, she introduces the idea of semilingualism, the new deficit theory. And so we turn full circle and come back to the question of competence. She dismisses the idea that it is something that can be measured in terms of full or partially full and claims that «there is an inverse relationship between what can be easily measured and assessed quantitatively and its importance for effective communicative skills.» (p. 21). She states the need for a new definition of language proficiency and questions the traditional policy of eradication of the minority language

in favour of the majority one. Her opinion is clearly that of those who believe in maintenance programs: the right to one's own language being a basic human one.

Throughout the book both current and early research findings are quoted and a subtle but strong emphasis is put on empirical studies, suggesting that the author is well aware of the opinion held by some that sociolinguistic research methods are not scientific. This makes the book especially of interest to those new in this field of research. Indeed, whatever your knowledge of the subject, it makes a lively and interesting read, but above all it is aimed at those who are looking for an introduction to sociolinguistics, as the title suggests. Any potentially problematic terms are clearly and carefully defined and plentiful examples are given to illustrate the point in question. The author clearly states at the beginning of each chapter the matter to be dealt with, so in this respect it is also a book one can dip in and out of. In short, *Language in Society* is a highly enjoyable and accessible book.

Alison Wylie
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
Departament de Filologia Anglesa i
de Germanística