

REVIEWS

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TENSE AND ASPECT IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: FORM, MEANING, AND USE. *Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2000. Pp. xvi + 492. \$34.95 paper.

Following previous work in L1 acquisition, SLA has witnessed a veritable explosion of research activity in the domain of temporality since the mid 1980s. In the hefty book under review here, Kathleen Bardovi-Harlig, for several years one of the most active protagonists in the field, sets out to organize the dislocated array of findings, methods, and approaches to date.

The book contains nearly 500 pages divided into seven chapters as well as a foreword by the series editor, an extensive reference section, and a combined author and subject index. It is impossible to do justice to the detailed discussions and analyses presented in this book. On the whole, the exposition is articulate and well supported with tables and examples. The book also contains several very useful overview tables of key studies, which illustrate both the diversity (in terms of data-elicitation techniques and analytic frameworks) as well as the limitations (in terms of research designs and target languages investigated) of L2 research on temporality.

Chapter 1 outlines the goals and organization of the book and provides a historical sketch of L2 research on temporality, which, according to the author, reflects the history of research in SLA in general. Chapters 2–6 explore five different approaches to understanding the emergence and development of temporal expression that “reflect the present state of the art of second language acquisition research” (p. 409); these include meaning and function (chap. 2), morphological form (chap. 3), lexical semantics (chap. 4), discourse structure (chap. 5), and instruction (chap. 6). Each of these chapters surveys a single framework of analysis and includes research on a number of target languages. Emphasis is on the identification of general trends, developmental orders, and acquisitional sequences. Following the crosslinguistic reviews, each chapter presents one or more of the author’s own (previously published) empirical studies of temporal expression in L2 English within the framework discussed in the chapter. Throughout the book, L2 corpora are examined from more than one research perspective to illustrate how the framework chosen colors the results concerning the developmental process.

Chapter 2 reviews studies employing the meaning-oriented approach, emphasizing that the expression of temporality is not restricted to morphological markers of tense and aspect but is always based on the combined application of different types of coding principles, including pragmatics, lexis, and morphosyntax. The overall trend is for L2 learners to move from pragmatic strategies to lexical expressions and finally to the morphological marking of temporal meanings, the latter not being achieved by all learners.

Chapters 3–5 are devoted to “functional form-oriented research” (p. 11) on the emergence and development of tense-aspect morphology. The first part of chapter 3 provides a rather cursory account of the tense-aspect systems in English, Dutch, German, Italian,

is undoubtedly the most comprehensive text on one of the richest areas of L2 research available to date and therefore deserves the critical attention of all researchers and students of SLA.

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Alex Housen
Vrije Universiteit Brussel

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SOCIOLINGUISTIC VARIATION IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE. Ceil Lucas, Robert Bayley, and Clayton Valli. Washington, DC: Gallaudet University Press, 2001. Pp. xviii + 238. \$55.00 cloth.

This is the seventh volume in the highly acclaimed “Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities” series published by Gallaudet University Press. This volume is the first major attempt to document and analyze linguistic variation in American Sign Language (ASL). Based on seven years of research spread across the United States, including data collected from seven sites (Staunton, VA; Frederick, MD; Boston, MA; New Orleans, LA; Fremont, CA; Olathe, KS, and Kansas City, MO, together; and Bellingham, WA), *Sociolinguistic variation in American Sign Language* is a major contribution to the growing literature on the linguistics and sociolinguistics of ASL. It seeks to “provide a comprehensive description of the variables and constraints at work in sign language variation” (p. xv), building on the existing linguistic literature dealing with ASL. It succeeds admirably, if not in providing the final word on these complex issues, then by offering not only fascinating insights into sign language variation but also an empirical database that is unmatched in its depth and breadth in the field.

The volume is divided into nine chapters. The first two chapters provide the theoretical framework for the research project that was undertaken as well as a description of the process by which the ASL corpus was collected and analyzed. Chapter 3 then addresses the sociohistorical context for linguistic variation in the American Deaf community, examining in detail the important role played by residential schools for the deaf in general, and of the American School for the Deaf (in Hartford, CT; formerly the American Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb) in particular, as well as other social and political organi-

zations created by and for Deaf people. Chapters 4 and 5 deal with phonological variation in ASL, with the emphasis in chapter 4 on variation in handshape and in chapter 5 on variation in location. For readers not familiar with the linguistics of sign languages, the idea of phonological variation in a nonoral language may be a bit puzzling. In essence, linguists studying sign languages use the term phonology to refer to the study of the smallest units that make up individual signs—handshape, movement, location of sign, palm orientation, and nonmanual features of the sign. These phonological parameters function in a signed language in the same manner that phonemes operate in spoken languages. Chapter 6 takes us to the next step, focusing on grammatical and social conditioning of phonological variation in ASL. Chapter 7 deals with syntactic variation, focusing on the important and controversial issue of null-pronoun variation in ASL. Chapter 8 addresses the broad area of lexical variation—the only facet of linguistic diversity in ASL that has really received even limited attention in the past (albeit fairly superficial treatment that is more anecdotal than scientific in nature).

The research project on which this book was based, funded by the National Science Foundation in 1993, sought to answer two questions: (a) Can the internal constraints on variation, such as those defined and described in spoken languages, be identified and described for variations in ASL? and (b) Can the external social constraints on variation, such as those defined and described in spoken languages, be identified and described in ASL? In chapter 9, the concluding chapter of the volume, the authors provide the answer to both questions: clearly and demonstrably, yes. They also offer a powerful and compelling argument for the importance of research such as that reported in this volume, both in general and in particular for the Deaf communities in the United States and elsewhere.

There is, needless to say, a great deal about variation in ASL and other sign languages that is worth knowing that we do not yet know. If *Sociolinguistic variation in American Sign Language* is not the final word, it is nevertheless an incredibly valuable first word. As Roger Shuy notes in his “Foreword” to the book, “Although the last word on ASL sociolinguistics has not been said here, this book sends us on our way with a flourish.”

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Timothy Reagan
University of Connecticut

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LANGUAGE TESTING. *Tim McNamara*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. Pp. xvi + 140. \$7.40 paper.

McNamara's book on language testing is part of a series that introduces various areas of language study to readers with little or no formal training in linguistics. Like the other books in the series, it provides a broad overview of trends and issues in the field rather than going into technical depth in any one narrow area. The intent of this approach is to make the material accessible to a wide audience and to provide a “bigger picture” perspective that would render deeper consideration of particular language testing is-