Deborah SCHIFFRIN, *Approaches to Discourse.* Oxford: Blackwell,1994. x + 470 pages.

Approaches to Discourse, a book in Blackwell's «Textbooks in Linguistics» series, is a comprehensive work which is accessible to readers of all levels. At a purely introductory level, it offers clear, well-explained, and well-exemplified discussions of six major approaches to discourse analysis: speech act theory, interactional sociolinguistics, the ethnography of communication, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variation analysis. At a higher level, it seeks to unify these diverse approaches along a small number of theoretical lines, and it suggests directions for research to take.

The book is divided into three main parts, «The Scope of Discourse Analysis», «Approaches to Discourse Analysis», and a «Conclusion». The Conclusion is followed by three useful and interesting Appendices, the first of which gives guidelines for collecting data for discourse analysis, the second of which describes different conventions which can be used in transcribing the data, and the last of which provides an extensive sample of transcribed data. The book then ends with an exhaustive bibliography and a subject index.

Part I, «The Scope of Discourse Analysis», consists of two chapters: «Overview» and «Definitions of Discourse». The Overview simply outlines the structure of the book and states its goals, which are «to describe and compare several approaches to the linguistic analysis of discourse,» and to «clarify the scope of discourse analysis in such a way that it can continue to deal with a wide range of problems and phenomena –but in a more systematic and theoretically coherent way» (p. 5).

«Definitions of Discourse» launches into an interesting and informative discussion of the formalist versus function-alist dichotomy in linguistics. Schiffrin juxtaposes the views of the two paradigms, both in general and in matters directly concerning discourse. She discusses how their differences affect definitions of discourse, and, consequently, the objects of study and the methods used in analyses. She feels that the definitions proposed under these paradigms limit the range of questions that can be asked in discourse analysis and that it is still too soon in the development of this field to make such restrictions. In light of this, she offers the following simple definition: «discourse is utterances» (p. 39), with utterances considered as «units of language production... that are inherently contextualized» (p. 41). Thus she successfully finds a way to steer a middle course, combining the focus of formalists on linguistic structures with the functionalists' concern for how language is used in context. This solution may seem facile on the surface, basically taking no firm stand on either paradigm. But throughout the rest of the book, Schiffrin shows that this is, in fact, a good strategy, one which closes off no avenues of investigation to those interested in the study of discourse, while at the same time encouraging the use of combined formalist and functionalist theories and methods to investigate discourse-related issues.

Part II consists of six chapters, each one describing and illustrating a different approach to discourse analysis: speech act theory (Ch. 3), interactional sociolinguistics (Ch. 4), the ethnography of communication (Ch. 5), pragmatics (Ch. 6), conversation analysis (Ch. 7), and variation analysis (Ch. 8). Each chapter begins with a general introduction to the approach. Schiffrin discusses the origin of the approach, which usually lies outside of linguistics, in fields such as philosophy, sociology, and anthropology, and she

shows how this origin influences what research questions are posed under that approach and what methods are employed to answer them.

This introduction is then followed by an extensive, detailed analysis of data, in which Schiffrin demonstrates how the particular approach can be applied to the study of a given issue. The issues on which she concentrates are question-answer sequences (in Chapters 3, 4, and 5) and referring expressions (Chapters 6, 7, and 8). She also discusses other interesting issues, such as: the social significance of speaking for another (Chapter 4); the different functions of questions in different types of interviews (Chapter 5); the function of «there + BE + ITEM» structures in conversations (Chapter 7); and the differences between lists and narratives in discourse (Chapter 8).

Each chapter then ends with a series of exercises students can do for further practice. Some of these exercises are quite useful for reviewing the content of the chapter, while others are more ambitious in scope and more closely resemble topics for term papers. Over all, however, the exercises are quite good: well-formulated, interesting, and worthwhile.

Part III, the Conclusion, is made up of four chapters. In the first three chapters, Schiffrin demonstrates that, in studying discourse, one cannot analyze one language-related issue in isolation from other complementary issues. In Chapter 9, she shows that each approach discussed in the book concerns itself, of necessity, with both structure and function, regardless of whether the approach is primarily structurally-oriented or functionally-oriented. In Chapter 10, she shows that the approaches need to study both text and context in carrying out analyses, though the definition of «context» varies according to the approach, and these differing definitions play a significant role in determining how analyses are carried out.

In Chapter 11, Schiffrin shows how the nature of discourse is intertwined with the process of communication, though the actual model of communication assumed under specific approaches may differ.

Finally, in Chapter 12, «Conclusion: Language as Social Interaction,» Schiffrin addresses the problem of how to develop a theoretical framework which could unify the myriad approaches to discourse. After reviewing the differences among the various approaches, she develops three lines of argument to demonstrate what they have in common. First, she asserts that, although they may be governed by different underlying assumptions, they are all united by a shared one: the idea of language as interaction. She supports this claim by showing how, in one way or another, each approach incorporates this idea into its theory and methods. Second, she puts together a list of underlying principles which all approaches to discourse seem to share, emphasizing at the same time the descriptive rather than prescriptive nature of this list. Finally, she says that all approaches to discourse yield results that can be joined together in a common effort to answer three research questions: how social and linguistic resources differentiate a discourse from a random sequence of sentences; how our understanding of utterances in discourse contribute to our knowledge of language; and how social and linguistic resources are distributed throughout a speech community and across speech communities.

Schiffrin ends the book with a call for increasing the interdisciplinary nature of discourse analysis. In effect, she says that discourse analysis should return to its roots. She exhorts researchers to step out of the realm of linguistics and seek inspiration and knowledge of the world in other areas in the study of human thought, psychology, and social behavior, and then apply what they have discovered to a linguistic analysis of discourse. This

may seem like a rather weak conclusion, in that one would think that discourse analysts would naturally feel the need to familiarize themselves with the work being done in these fields, especially the research that touches directly or indirectly on their own interests. However, she may feel that the current academic system does not foster this interdisciplinarianism enough and that she has to explicitly tell researchers in discourse to be wary of overspecialization and of the tendency not to see the forest for the trees.

Over all, however, this book is very good. As a pedagogical tool, it will prove itself invaluable to students in discourse analysis. It also has things to say to seasoned veterans in the field. It provides the reader with a solid, well-informed perspective on the process and praxis of discourse analysis and constitutes another important step on the road to developing a unified, and unifying, theory of discourse.

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Alessandro DURANTI and Charles GOODWIN. *Rethinking Context: Language as an Interactive Phenomenon.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. viii +363 pages.

The editors of *Rethinking context: Language as an interactive phenomenon,* Alessandro Duranti and Charles Goodwin, successfully bring together research traditions on context that include perspectives from ethnomethodology, human interaction, the ethnography of speaking, and conversation analysis. In doing so, they achieve the two objectives stated in their excellent introduction, namely to serve as a point of encounter for these different perspectives, and to illustrate how the study of context can be approached from the fields of Sociology, Anthropology and Linguistics. The authors in this volume contribute to the study of context with articles both on theory and practice. In order to guide the first time reader, a broad classification of the contributions can be made according to: (a) theoretical studies; (b) indexicality; (c) context creating strategies, and (d) case studies.

(a) Theoretical studies. The main theoretical contributions are by Gumperz, Schegloff, Kendon, and the preliminary introduction by A. Duranti and C. Goodwin. Gumperz applies his contextualization cues to cross-cultural conversation, pointing out that misunderstanding occurs when participants do not realize that cultures have different strategies for the same conversational goal. Schegloff describes how the meaning of an utterance is achieved by tying it to the previous speaker's turn. In this fashion talk becomes context for further talk, an aspect also analyzed by Schegloff in storytelling and by Bauman in narratives. Kendon makes use of Goffman's attentional tracks[1]

1. Attentional tracks refer to the different ways in which participants organize their attention. Goffman distinguishes a main story-line track, a directional-line track, which serves to organize the main story-line track (i.e., a change of alignment), and disattend tracks which are events that are officially treated as irrelevant to the activity in progress. A more detailed analysis is given in Goffman's *Frame Analysis* (Goffman 1974).