A dictionary of South African English on historical principles Ed. by Penny Silva, Wendy Dore, Dorothea Mantzel, Colin Mueller, and Madeleine Wright (review)

M. Lynne Murphy

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Ch. 1, 'Dialogic instruction: When recitation be-
comes conversation' (1–29), sets up the difference
between recitation, dominant in American class-
rooms, and dialogism. Recitation involves pre-
scripted questions which require short, 'right' an-
swers from students and have little coherence. Inter-
action is procedural and superficial, and students are
not frequently engaged. Dialogism focuses on 'the
dynamic processes whereby meanings unfold in the
interaction of two or more conversants' (10). It rec-
ognizes the 'social logic of reciprocity' that charac-
terizes all discourse, though not always classroom
discourse.

Ch. 2, 'The big picture: Language and learning in
hundreds of English lessons' (30–74), describes the
methods and results of a two-year study conducted
in secondary schools. The discourse analysis of class-
room interactions focused on questions because, ac-
cording to the authors, they play a key role in either
excluding or including the voices of students. Two
features which indicated where classroom interaction
landed on a continuum from monologic to dialogic
were AUTHENTICITY (whether the question had a pre-
scribed answer or not) and UPTAKE (whether the
teacher built on previous answers to ask subsequent
questions or not). The results of the study showed
that, based on testing, students learned more if the
interaction was more dialogic, but few classes were.

Ch. 3, 'A closer look at authentic interaction: Pro-
files of teacher-student talk in two classrooms'
(75–88), describes two classrooms that seem, on the
surface, to contradict the results. However, the au-
thors show that a closer look at the data reveals pat-
terns of interaction that coincide with their findings.
In fact, the classroom that seemed dialogic was actu-
ally characterized by teacher control of knowledge
with test results showing little student learning. The
classroom that seemed monologic was characterized
by teacher control of process, but a dialogic approach
to knowledge which engaged the students and en-
couraged learning.

Ch. 4, 'What's a teacher to do? Dialogism in the
classroom' (89–108), discusses ways teachers can
review their pedagogy in order to make their class-
rooms more dialogic. Rather than specific activities,
this chapter recommends a reevaluation of views of
knowledge, teacher and student roles, and control in
the classroom. In short, teachers who abandon the
traditional IRE sequence as the only mode of class-
room interaction and incorporate a more dialogic dis-
cussion allow students to move from rememberers
to thinkers.

This move to a new epistemology, along with sug-
gestions for enacting it, makes *Opening dialogue*
useful to teachers at any level who want to reevaluate
their pedagogical practices and to those who plan
curricula. It has an underlying bent against tracking
and test-centered teaching which coincides with the
view of knowledge and learning advanced in the

study. One shortcoming is that, although the authors
mention that gender, race, social economic status,
etc., all influence the interaction in the classroom,
these factors are usually 'controlled for' and rarely
discussed. Overall, the authors echo common themes
in education, highlight some contradictions in theory
and practice, and through examples of classroom dis-
course lead to an understanding reinforcing the need
for change. [LISA H. MACNEILLEY, *Wayne State Uni-
versity.*]

**A dictionary of South African English
on historical principles.** Ed. by PENNY
SILVA, WENDY DORE, DOROTHEA MAN-
TZEL, COLIN MUELLER, and MADELEINE
WRIGHT. Oxford & Cape Town: Oxford
University Press, 1996. Pp. xxx, 825.

It's a rare joy to review a book that is as likable
as this one. In the tradition and style of the *OED*,
this volume presents words, meanings, and usages
that have developed or been adopted by speakers of
South African English (SAfE). English has a unique
position among the many languages of South Africa
in that it is the most 'neutral' in terms of ethnic and
regional identification. As such, it has been adopted
as a first or second language by the widest variety
of people (from Afrikaner to Zulu), who have left
their mark on the language. The words in this diction-
ary come into the language by a number of means:
borrowing, semantic change, coining, and occasion-
ally from British English that has been forgotten else-
where (e.g. *robot* as a traffic light). The dictionary
not only serves as a source on lexical innovation and
change but as a cultural history of South Africa over
the past 180 or so years. This history can be read in
the helpful cultural and historical notes, etymologies,
and plentiful citation quotes, or inferred from the
ways in which SAfE distinguishes itself from other
Englishes, for instance in the large number of words
for armored vehicles (*buffel, Casspir, hippo, mellow-
yellow, ratel*, inter alia).

Items are, of course, missing from the dictionary,
either because the editors hadn't yet come across a
form in a jargon, regional, or ethnic variety of SAfE
or because they hadn't realized that the word was
peculiar to SAfE (in the latter case, *stop street* for
an intersection, and in the former, *condonation*, the
odious practice of passing students with failing
marks). But, of course, no dictionary is ever com-
plete, and this one does an impressive job of record-
ing legal, industrial, and agricultural jargon,
historical terms relating to politics and lifestyle, flora
and fauna names, as well as the more widespread
vocabulary of everyday living and politics (including
the acronyms that so puzzle foreigners). The only
(mild) error of fact that I've found is the definition

of *PWV* (the former name of Gauteng province) as 'Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vaal', while on the provincial map (xx) it is identified as 'Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging' (both acronyms are in popular use now although it seems they were correct in identifying 'Vaal' as the original).

The dictionary is completely accessible to a foreigner (although the lack of illustrations may leave you wondering what all those armored vehicles and antelopes look like). One concession to local linguistic politics that might not sit well with an international audience is the use of the South African coinage *Sintu* as the name of the Bantu language group, because *Bantu* has become somewhat taboo through its prominence as a racial label in apartheid policy. In etymologies and descriptions, '*Sintu*' is always followed in parentheses by '*Bantu*' so the motivation for using it seems somewhat muddled. One must concede that the politics of racial, ethnic, and linguistic labeling are particularly tricky in South Africa, so it is to the editors' credit that the usage labeling and description for the many epithets is accurately and sensitively executed.

This dictionary, then, makes a wonderful addition to the literature on world Englishes and is a worthy bearer of the Oxford name. I recommend it wholeheartedly to anyone with interests in English, lexicography, or South Africa. [M. LYNNE MURPHY, *Baylor University*.]

Pragmatic development. By ANAT NINIO and CATHERINE SNOW. (Essays in developmental science.) Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996. Pp. xii, 222

This book marks a watershed in the study of pragmatic development in children. Ninio and Snow have provided the most comprehensive and theoretically consistent account of pragmatic development published to date, and it is likely to become a standard reference point for future work in this area for some time to come.

In the first chapter N & S set out their approach to pragmatics which they define as 'knowledge necessary for the appropriate, effective, rule-governed employment of speech in interpersonal situations' (4). This broad and inclusive definition is grounded in the perspective of cultural psychology, and they see the development of pragmatic skills as a process of enculturation and of social development, the latter being seen as 'the accumulation of knowledge necessary for the successful conduct of interpersonal affairs through the medium of language' (12). All formal aspects of language are viewed as component skills necessary for pragmatic success.

In Ch. 2 they present a taxonomy of communicative acts which includes 70 'talk interchange' cate-

gories, 63 categories of speech act, and 3 types of discourse category. These are incorporated into three separate coding systems designed to fit particular research goals: the First Communicative Acts (FCA) coding system for children in the single word period, the Inventory of Communicative Acts—Abridged (INCA-A) for older children, and the Parental Interview on 100 Communicative Acts (PICA-100). These include far more material than other coding systems—for example many 'unmarked' forms which others have previously excluded as marginal—e.g. vocatives, interjections, onomatopoeic forms, imitations—and which N & S argue are truly communicative. In previous work on developmental pragmatics there has been no generally agreed method of analysis or theory; most studies have used only small samples; the more detailed coding systems have focused on only a subset of possible features; and the more comprehensive systems which attempt to include both younger and older children are inconsistent with one another. N & S aim to replace this bewildering theoretical and methodological heterogeneity with a single standard framework which is both comprehensive and theoretically consistent.

Chs. 3–6 report detailed findings of research using this coding system and provide a comprehensive picture of pragmatic development from infancy up to the age of 2;8. Of particular value is the fact that observational studies are complemented by parental report studies, which means one gets a clear idea of the child's full repertoire rather than just what occurs in the observed sessions.

The final two chapters focus on the development of conversational ability and connected discourse. They are rather different in style from previous chapters in that they are more discursive, include many transcripts of conversation as examples, and are to a much greater extent overviews of the research literature, drawing somewhat less on the authors' own research.

Although much of what is covered in this book has been reported by N & S and their colleagues elsewhere, it has not been widely or easily available. Here we have at last an integrated account of their work written in an easily accessible style and a full and revised version of their coding systems which spells out in detail the theoretical assumptions on which they are based. [MICHAEL R. PERKINS, *University of Sheffield*.]

The Arabic contributions to the English language: An historical dictionary. By GARLAND CANNON in collaboration with ALAN S. KAYE. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1994. Pp. xi, 345. Paper DM 98.00.

The investigation of lexical borrowings in a language provides the opportunity to determine the con-