



## Book review

### ***Language, culture, and society: An introduction to linguistic anthropology***

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I recommend this book to undergraduate anthropology, communication, and linguistics undergraduate students and anyone interested in understanding the intricate ties between language and culture in this globalized society. This book is an excellent foundation for learning how language interacts with culture and society. It explains how people use language to communicate, build relationships, share ideas, and express identity. The authors present everyday examples and stories to make complex concepts easier to understand. Moreover, in this updated edition, the authors add new topics, such as digital communication and globalization, which make the book significant in the present context. This book is divided into 15 chapters, each addressing key aspects of linguistic anthropology. It compounds topics, including foundational concepts such as phonetics and morphology, to broader themes like language and power, identity, and digital communication.

The first chapter, *Introducing Linguistic Anthropology*, provides a historical overview of linguistic anthropology and situates the concept in the broader field of anthropology. The authors discuss the main contributions of pioneers like Franz Boas and Edward Sapir. Key concepts include the “Americanist” tradition, linguistic relativism, and the interplay between language, thought, and culture. The second chapter, *Methods of Linguistic Anthropology*, emphasizes the various methodologies used in linguistic anthropology and points out the difference between linguistic analysis and ethnographic approaches. The main points are participant observation, interviewing techniques, and the role of informants. This chapter highlights the importance of combining linguistic precision with cultural contextualization in research.

Later, in chapter 3, *The “Nuts and Bolts” of Linguistic Anthropology I: Language is Sound* portrays the anatomy and physiology of speech regarding how sounds are produced and perceived. It also introduces phonetics and phonology, explaining the concepts of phones, phonemes, and prosodic features. The practical activities can help enhance understanding of sound systems across different languages. Folly by chapter 4, *The “Nuts and Bolts” of Linguistic Anthropology II: Structure of Words and Sentences*. This chapter explains morphology and syntax, emphasizing how sounds combine to form meaningful units and sentences. It introduces transformational-generative grammar (Chomsky’s framework) and contrasts it with functional approaches. Ultimately, it presents that diverse languages illustrate universal and unique grammatical patterns.

These next three chapters present language in use and development. The fifth chapter, *Communicating Nonverbally*, elaborates on the wider scope of paralinguistic and nonverbal communication. The chapter adds more topics, including kinesics (body language), proxemics (use of space), and the significance of silence in various cultures. The authors

discuss further the evolution and functions of writing systems and sign languages. The next chapter, *The Development and Evolution of Language*, examines the origins and evolution of language, comparing human communication with non-human primates. The authors review theories of language emergence, the monogenesis versus polygenesis debate, and the life cycles of languages, including factors contributing to language death. In the last chapter of this group, *Acquiring and Using language(s)*, the authors explore language acquisition and multilingualism, discussing how children learn their first language(s) and how bilingual and multilingual individuals navigate multiple linguistic systems. The main topics present include code-switching, diglossia, and the neurological aspects of language learning.

The eighth chapter, *Language Through Time*, focuses on historical linguistics and language change. Topics include sound shifts, protolanguage reconstruction, and language family classification. The authors highlight the role of linguistic anthropology in tracing cultural and historical connections through language. The authors explore sociolinguistics in the following chapter, *Languages in Variation and Languages in Contact*, emphasizing variation within and between languages. Examples include dialects, idiolects, pidgins, creoles, and the effects of language contact. Real-world examples illustrate how social factors influence linguistic practices and language evolution.

Chapter ten, *The Ethnography of Communication*, links language to anthropology. The authors examine speech communities, communicative competence, and speech events, emphasizing the role of context in shaping linguistic behavior. Dell Hymes's SPEAKING framework is a key highlight. The later chapter, *Culture as Cognition, Culture as Categorization*, presents how language shapes thought through categorization and meaning-making. The authors discuss semantics, ethnoscience, and cultural models, illustrating how linguistic structures reflect and reinforce cultural worldviews. The next is chapter 12, *Language, Culture, and Thought*. The authors explain the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, discussing linguistic determinism and relativity. The chapter critiques and reviews these ideas with modern examples, such as cross-linguistic studies of color terminology and spatial cognition.

Chapters 13 and 14 present how languages can present identity and ideology. Chapter 13, *Language, Identity, and Ideology I: Variations in Gender*, emphasizes how gender shapes and is shaped by language. It presents various topics, such as gendered speech patterns, the role of Language in LGBTQ+ communities, and the intersection of language with power and ideology. In addition, chapter 14, *Language, Identity, and Ideology II: Variations in Class, Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality*, examines the sociopolitical dimensions of language, discussing how language reflects and constructs identities tied to social class, ethnicity, and nationality. The case studies present issues of linguistic prejudice, language policy, and identity politics.

The last chapter, *The Linguistic Anthropology of a Globalized and Digitalized World*, addresses how globalization and digital media impact language use. The issues are language planning, literacy practices, online communication, and the ethical implications of linguistic research in a globalized world.

The book takes an interdisciplinary approach by combining anthropology, linguistics, and sociology to provide a well-rounded view of language and culture. It features engaging examples, such as case studies on the linguistic diversity of the Philippines and the role of

sign languages in different cultures, which deepen the theoretical discussions. The inclusion of contemporary topics like digital communication, emoji usage, and online language practices makes the book highly relevant to today's linguistic landscape. Additionally, pedagogical tools like study guides, projects, and glossaries are included to enhance comprehension and engagement for readers.

While this book thoroughly explains the concepts, the case examples are focused on specific areas. For instance, while the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis is well-covered, more examples of its application in non-Western contexts would help the explanation be more worldwide. In addition, the technical content, such as phonetics, may be complex for readers without a background in linguistics. *Language, Culture, and Society* is a significant resource for students and professionals. This book provides the foundational knowledge of concepts of linguistic anthropology. It also encourages readers to critically understand how language functions in diverse cultural and social settings. Engaging in contemporary issues, coupled with its accessible format, makes this book a standout text in the field.

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