An Introduction to Linguistics and Language Studies

Anne McCabe
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This introductory textbook provides readers with a foundation in methods for analyzing and understanding language from various theoretical perspectives within linguistics and language studies. Its novel approach introduces systemic functional linguistics, text and discourse analysis, and formal approaches to linguistics. It demonstrates applications of these approaches to reveal how we use language in society, how our brains process language, and how we learn language. Topics include phonetics, phonology, conversation analysis, morphology, syntax, semantics, language change and variation, animals and language, the brain and language, and first and second language acquisition. The main language focused on is English, although other languages are also used to illustrate the linguistic principles. Exercises and questions for reflection are provided throughout, and a final chapter is included which gathers explanations of various fields of practice within linguistics, written by linguists from around the world, including David Crystal (Clinical Linguistics), Frances Christie (Educational Linguistics), and Malcolm Coulthard (Forensic Linguistics). The book offers an array of analytical tools for undergraduate students of language, communication, and education, and provides an overview of the field for those interested in further study in linguistics and applied language studies.

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Reviews

This innovative blend of textbook, workbook, and anthology is a welcome addition to the introductory linguistics literature.

David Crystal, Honorary Professor of Linguistics at the University of Wales, Bangor

With An Introduction to Linguistics and Language Studies, Anne McCabe presents an enormously appealing, accessible, and up to date treatment of the field to those who always wanted to know what it was all about — but, perhaps, were afraid to ask! They will come to explore the major modalities of language use and their relation to mind, appreciate...
Introduction to Linguistics. Marcus Kracht Department of Linguistics, UCLA. 3125 Campbell Hall 450 Hilgard Avenue Los Angeles, CA 90095–1543 kracht@humnet.ucla.edu. 2. Linguists mostly study only signs that consist of just one sentence. And this is what we shall do here, too. However, texts are certainly more than a sequence of sentences, and the study of discourse (which includes texts and dialogs) is certainly a very vital one. In linguistics, language signs are constituted of four different levels, not just two: phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Semantics deals with the meanings (what is signified), while the other three are all concerned with the exponent. At the lowest level we find that everything is composed from a small set of sounds, or—when we write—of letters. Anne McCabe. The second edition of this popular textbook provides readers with a foundation in methods for analysing and understanding language from various theoretical perspectives within linguistics and language studies. Its novel approach introduces systemic functional linguistics, text and discourse analysis, and formal approaches to linguistics. It demonstrates applications of these approaches to reveal how we use language in society, how our brains process language, and how we learn language. The main language focused on is English, while other languages are also drawn on to illustrate the exuberance of language change and variation in social context, and consider the complexities of language learning and development in relation to our biological make-up. Always, they will be involved on all levels: as inquirers interested in major theoretical questions and empirical approaches; as language users who are constantly invited to reflect on the nature of language through an unusually rich and engaging array of exercise that enliven each chapter of the book; as learners seeking assurances, through chapter summaries, a glossary, and exercise answers, that their own reading of the issues is accurate; and as students of the field desiring to place their new knowledge within other areas of linguistics and to receive suggestions for further reading. Applied linguistics and its students are the happy beneficiaries of McCabe’s most welcome contribution.

Heidi Byrnes, George M. Roth Distinguished Professor of German, Georgetown University

McCabe provides novices to the linguistics community with a well-written and highly interactive text that allows readers with various levels of pre-existing knowledge to explore both the theoretical and practical applications of linguistics and language studies across many topics, and she provides a contemporary alternative to similar introductory publications in the field of linguistics. The text is one that clearly serves numerous purposes for both novices and experts in the fields of linguistics and language studies.

Robert A. Cote, Sharjah Women’s College, United Arab Emirates, in LINGUIST List 22.4990 (December 2011)