

HALL, CHRISTOPHER J., SMITH, PATRICK H., & WICAKSONO, RACHEL. *Mapping Applied Linguistics: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*. London, UK: Routledge (2011). 411 pp. \$50.95 (paperback). (ISBN 978-0-415-55913-3).

#### INTRODUCTION FROM A COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Selecting a textbook for an introductory undergraduate course on the field of applied linguistics has a number of challenges. The study of applied linguistics is usually reserved for graduate programs and is almost non-existent at the undergraduate level. As well, it is a wide and far-reaching field yet a majority of the introductory volumes on the area tend to focus narrowly on the study of second language learning and teaching, thus foregoing discussions of real life applications in language policy, literacy, translation, lexicography, forensic linguistics and language pathology. This complicates the process of finding a textbook that provides a broad and current overview of the field in language accessible to a beginning student. This review, co-written by a professor and two undergraduate students, examines the applied linguistics text from both teacher and student perspectives based on direct experience from having used it in the classroom. Our review begins with the instructor's point of view and then moves to that of the students.

Having been introduced to Hall, Smith, and Wicaksono's *Mapping Applied Linguistics: A Guide for Students and Practitioners*, I was immediately taken by the breadth and relevance of the subjects covered as well as the approachable writing style that the authors had adopted. Despite the book's audience being listed as learners at the advanced undergraduate and master's levels, I felt that first year students would be able to tackle the presented material, critically reflect on their understanding of various language issues and concerns, and thus leave the course with an appreciation for "the language-related needs of individuals and groups in 'the melange of the everyday'" (p. xvii).

The need to build this appreciation of the everyday – echoed throughout the book – stems from the often perilous "common sense" beliefs about the nature

and role of language held by many outside the field. In fact, the authors begin by bringing to the forefront the most prevalent “dead ends” and then go on to outline current perspectives from research in linguistics (and beyond) to skillfully dispel each. Applied linguistics is presented as an innovative and expanding field, charged with the task of identifying and solving “the practical problems facing language users” around the world (p. 4). A mapping metaphor is realized in the structure of the text, with the three parts taking the reader on a journey from general to more concrete. Part A tackles “language in the everyday use” and looks at the fundamentals of language variation, populations, policy, and discourse. Language education – the key area in applied linguistics – is discussed in Part B. Here, the issues of language learning and teaching are presented from many facets: language education in general, bilingual and multilingual education, additional language education, and literacy. Part C zeroes in on the “expert users” of language, which include lexicographers, translators, language pathologists, and forensic linguists. Arguably, the text succeeds in making the field of applied linguistics relatable and relevant, yet conveys its intricacies while also identifying areas worthy of further investigation. This review now turns to the student perspective, as written by the student co-authors.

#### **EXAMINATION OF THE TEXT FROM THE STUDENTS**

My co-author and I feel that there are two characteristics of this text that feature prominently for students. The first is the text’s three distinct sections, which keep the extensive topics organized while reiterating and integrating the material effectively. This aids with the internalization of the material, as each chapter relates itself to those previous, while maintaining a broader cohesion. This structure makes it easy to apply a cross-disciplinary approach, allowing for problem solving from various viewpoints and methodologies. In fact, the text encourages this by providing students with a list of additional readings and activities at the end of each chapter. The second characteristic is the inclusion of definitions within the margins of almost every page, supported by the extensive glossary, which were extremely beneficial to gain a proper understanding of the material. Their placement insured quick and convenient access while also providing an excellent study aid, as the terminology was therefore contextualized. We also found the extensive index, sectioned into topics, languages, and places, extremely useful for pinpointing specific topics of interest for both tests and projects.

The text is devoted to an in-depth descriptive view of language. We feel that its use of articles, images, and other items from various cultures and societies provides a good sense of global relevancy and sensitivity. At the same time, these materials provide a side benefit to visual learners. In all, this text is accessible to undergraduate students and useful to professors looking for an easy-to-use classroom resource.

Despite the authors' thorough investigation, the text does leave the reader with more questions than it answers. However, this should be taken as a good sign, as it reflects the fluid nature of the field itself. The questions generated are not a fault of the authors, but rather a sign of this text's ability to encourage further reading and inquiry and provide a basis for encouraging aspiring researchers to the field. The text's glimpse into the field of applied linguistics gives the reader opportunities at every turn for master's research as it states plainly where there are gaps in knowledge.

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