

Introduction to *Language, Meaning, and Society*, Vol. 1

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When the editors of *Language, Meaning, and Society* asked me to write an introduction to the initial volume, I was delighted. While their own work is not represented in the content itself, these two editors have created an exciting new intellectual space. Terra Edwards and Chiho Sunakawa did an enormous amount of work to bring this effort to fruition, and they deserve applause for their initiative, their inspiration, and for the accomplishment of this initial issue.

The papers in this volume represent many current themes in the study of language, meaning, and society. Maria de García, for example, in “On Ethnographic Responsibility: A Discourse-Centered Approach,” discusses the challenges of ethnographic practice and the role of anthropologists’ and others’ own words in shaping realities within and beyond the fieldwork setting. Her article is not just a thoughtful critique of anthropological practice—which tends to overemphasize academic frames for local stories—but a model for the responsible study of discourse in culture. She exemplifies this in her own work with the women of the Grupo de Mujeres por la Paz, a community-based organization of Ixil Mayan women in Guatemala. Many points in this article address the practice of anthropology in collaboration with its subjects.

In “Repetition in Apachean Narrative Discourse: From Discourse Structure to Language Learning in Morphologically Complex Languages,” Melissa Axelrod and Jule Gomez de García discuss the importance of repetition across a rich range of languages and contexts. They look at repetition as a device in constructing and conveying meaning, building cohesion, and assisting in language learning. They also discuss many other uses of repetition in speakers’ productions, drawing our attention to a central aspect of language use. Further, the authors discuss the important role of repetition in language revitalization. Data are included from Mescalero, Chiricahua, Jicarilla, and Plains Apache, making this a vital contribution to what we know about morphologically complex languages.

In “Discoursal & Generic Features of U.S. Army Obituaries: A mini-corpus analysis of contemporary military death announcements,” Lance Askildson discusses a topic that is at the forefront of many discussions in the local and global media: the Iraq War. His specific concern is the way deaths are described and characterized using particular textual means. The author’s goal is to show how the use of language in these announcements influences perception of the deaths of American soldiers, which are reported as impersonal and distant. Using discourse analysis and an adapted genre move analysis approach, Askildson further analyzes authority building, the role of audience, and the impact of language choice and register. This is a timely and thoughtful analysis of the role of language in the circulation of ideas.

In “Reported Speech, Codeswitching, and Speech Genre as Integrated Phenomena in Ecuadorian Quichua,” Simeon Floyd discusses bilingual code-switching and reported speech in relation to storytelling genres in Ecuadorian Quichua. His focus is on relationships among these three

topics. He shows for example, that everyday conversation in the region has a high degree of language mixing, whereas traditional Quichua narratives contain limited Spanish content. He shows how reported speech is used by speakers to frame direct versus indirect experience in distinct ways in traditional narratives and Bible stories. Well-chosen examples are used to help us understand interrelated features of a language and the cultural aspects of code mixing. This is an important study of multilingualism and the organization of experience.

All the papers here are significant contributions to the field of linguistic anthropology and fine examples of its potential across a broad range of scholarship in language, culture, and communication. *Language Meaning, and Society* promises to be not only beneficial to students but also influential to readers with many diverse academic interests.