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Kiesling, Scott F. & Paulston, Christina Bratt. (Eds.), (2005). *Intercultural discourse and communication: The essential readings*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub.

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Intercultural Discourse and Communication: The Essential Readings is a rich anthology of twenty representative articles on intercultural communication co-edited by Scott F. Kiesling and Christina Bratt Paulston, both of the Linguistics Department of the University of Pittsburgh. This 330-page volume, which includes 18 expert researchers in anthropology, intercultural communication, and education, provides a convenient source of foundational/ theoretical works, case studies, cultural content and identity pieces, and applications to 'real-world' problems for students and scholars interested in intercultural discourse and communication. *The Essential Readings* is organized into four parts: (1) Approaches to Intercultural Discourse; (2) Intercultural Communication: Case Studies, (3) Cultural Contact: Issues of Identity, and (4) Implications. Each part begins with a brief introduction by the editors and ends with a set of discussion questions.

The reviewers believe that *Intercultural Discourse and Communication: The Essential Readings* may provide valuable insights to teacher educators, particularly those who prepare teachers to work in America's increasingly culturally, linguistically and cognitively diverse schools. As multicultural/multilingual educators, the reviewers argue that attempts to close the academic achievement gap existing among different ethnic and linguistic groups would require the concerted effort of intercultural communicators and Pre-K-12 educators who must be prepared to work hand- in- hand and venture beyond the scope of their disciplines.

In recent years, what had been America's fairly homogeneous student population has diversified. Meeting the needs of the 75.8 million children and adults enrolled in schools throughout the country, from nursery school to college, has become more challenging (U.S. Census, 2007a). An indicator of America's language diversity is exemplified by the more than 350 world languages spoken by the over five million Pre-K-12 English language learners (ELL) (Spanish was the language spoken by 77 percent the ELL students) and that 20 percent of American households a language other than English is regularly spoken (NCELA, 2008; U.S. Census, 2007b)

The academic achievement gap of culturally, linguistically, and cognitively diverse students who lag considerably behind their White counterparts is a major concern to all of us. The reviewers posit that educators' understanding of intercultural communication may significantly alleviate this problem. According to a 2008 Pew Research Center report, America demographic projects show that America's "racial and ethnic mix will change markedly by mid-century ... with the Hispanic population tripling in size and increasing its share of the total to 29%. Among non-Hispanic race groups, the Asian share will rise to 9%, the black share will hold steady at 13% and the white share will fall to 47% (Passel & Cohn, 2008, p. 1)

Currently, however, the demographic and educational paradigm of the United States is drastically different. Not only has the student population recently become much more multicultural and multilingual, but also the ways in which schools and teachers deal with this diverse student body require major changes in their mindset, teaching methodologies, curriculum, and awareness of other cultures and the unique communication styles of their ELL students. A lack of awareness of these cultural differences of their diverse students' backgrounds on the part of educators can lead to students' misunderstandings, confusion, low self-esteem and low academic achievement, and, unfortunately, an increase in their school dropout rate. Therefore, it is essential that educators develop a keen awareness of intercultural differences in communication to ensure that all students, regardless of ethnic, linguistic or national background, will succeed in school. A book such as *The Essential Readings* may assist in accomplishing this goal.

In the first part of the volume, Dell Hymes describes the concept of linguistic competence as a means of analyzing and utilizing a language effectively across cultures. According to Hymes, a speaker must not only know a host language, but also understand the cultural speech patterns within a linguistic community. With America's increasingly linguistically diverse student population, we posit that schoolteachers should be aware of the complexities and implications of culturally diverse speech in the classroom. Inspired by Hymes, we believe that by understanding the connections between language and culture, teachers and students from different cultures and linguistic backgrounds will be able significantly improve their students' academic achievement.

The second part of the book focuses on intercultural encounters and their influences on intercultural communication. Although today's classrooms are settings of diverse intercultural encounters, some educators are frequently unaware of the implications of this diversity and the availability of intercultural communication tools. Thus, increasing teachers' awareness that classroom settings are also intercultural encounters becomes essential in American education.

Gumperz' research, if applied to the classroom, could assist teachers working in diverse settings reduce misunderstandings and dramatically improve their communication with their students and families. As Gumperz explains, many forms of language are not explicit and must be learned and appreciated, for example, intonation patterns or even the use of sarcasm. He also provides several examples of differences in linguistic expressions, such as responding to questions or pauses in conversations, which can lead to cross cultural misunderstandings or uneasiness.

Singh, Lele and Martohardjono go a step further in explaining Gumperz' hypothesis, and by doing so, they also contribute valuable lessons to educators working with diverse student populations. They assert that an appreciation for interethnic sociolinguistics, i.e., the unique linguistic features of a culture, subculture or social class, is essential in promoting intercultural understanding. We believe this is a paramount issue in helping educators understand linguistic and cultural communicative differences. The writers give the example of a misunderstanding between American and Chinese speakers. For example, Chinese speakers may interpret the direct, linear American style of communication as biased, closed-minded and constrictive as opposed to the Chinese style of communication, which they consider more open-ended, less biased and more logical. Another example of interethnic sociolinguistics is the misunderstanding that may occur between a Hindu speaker and an English speaker concerning the expression of gratitude. An

English speaker may interpret the Hindu's speaker lack of saying "thank you" as indifference or ignorance, while the Hindu speaker thinks the English speaker is being insincere. Such cross-cultural communicative differences in our schools often lead to misunderstandings, hurt feelings and tension between educators, students and the families they serve.

The final part of the text discusses the importance of understanding language in social and cross-cultural contexts, stressing cultural differences in expression of ideas and feelings, periods of silence or speech, rhetorical questions, African-American language patterns, indirect speech, and other concepts that may pose intercultural problems. This section of the book attempts to explain the complexities of multiple ethnic identities, such as among Dominican students in Providence, R.I, who are members of both the Hispanic community and an African background. Their multiple identities and heteroglossic language tend to highly influence the Dominicans' speech patterns as well as their interactions among different social groups.

Intercultural Discourse and Communication: The Essential Readings is an excellent reader of classic primary texts, which will definitely be of interest to faculty and students in both cross-cultural and intercultural communication, as well as for professional libraries. Although not intended to a teacher-education and Pre-K-12 teacher audience, we believe that the reader provides some valuable insights for teachers. While the text is valuable for promoting a more global understanding of intercultural discourse analysis, it is not specifically aimed at the needs of teachers in diverse classrooms.

The reviewers would like to see, in a future edition of this book, articles and discussions that could assist classroom teachers in their daily intercultural communication with their diverse students. For example, many school districts in the United States have a predominately native English-speaking teacher population and students who speak more than 50 different mother tongues, and come from many socioeconomic and religious backgrounds. Their classrooms, therefore, are very different from those in which the reviewers and the teachers themselves were educated. For example, one of the reviewers was educated in a monolingual and largely White school in rural New Jersey, having very little exposure or contact with multilingual, multicultural students. Currently, she teaches English to students from China, Korea, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Iraq, and Mongolia. An example of a college classroom communication pattern was a discussion of several international versions of the classic fairy tale, "Cinderella", which led to an analysis of the relationship of language and culture from the international students' perspectives and their difficulties in selecting the appropriate English words to explain cultural nuances. More often than not, the students burst into laughter when an English language learner inadvertently translated a word from the native tongue into English, which may have a completely different meaning, connotation or interpretation. Even native Spanish speakers from different nationalities encounter these linguistic misinterpretations, such as the word "tinto", which for a Colombian, is a cup of coffee, but for a Spaniard, is a glass of red wine. Teachers working in intercultural scenarios should become aware of the resources that intercultural communicators have at their disposal and be able to apply this knowledge to the communication patterns of the diverse classroom.

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