

narrowing the discussion of the socio-cultural world of the public and private domains. The argument that media genres target various social groups, and the conclusion that access to particular discourses empowers individuals is alluded to, but not pursued.

Chapter VII revisits Pierce's definition of signs to highlight the perception of communication as an exercise primarily in the production and negotiation of signs. This chapter devotes some space to the introduction of the necessary theoretical vocabulary for distinguishing subjectivism/objectivism, understanding habitus, and the philosophical implications of Foucault's insights into the nature of taxonomies. It concludes with a discussion of Bourdieu's definition of cultural field and cultural capital.

Chapter VIII would be particularly useful to those teaching in areas of language and gender. It explores the notion of ideology and the social implications of embedded ideological stances, before moving on to consider the contributions to theories of ideology by Marx, Volosinov, Gramsci, Althusser and Laclau.

Chapter IX examines the theorising of subjectivity, describing the theoretical positions of Freud, Lacan and Foucault, and discussing the effect of the different positions on discourse forms. A discussion follows of Butler's (1993) work on the how the relationship between subjectivities and notions of appropriate performances can be connected to communication practices.

Chapter X looks at visual media and attempts to make the familiar strange and challenges readers revisit their own territory and try to interpret it in terms of theory.

*Communication and Cultural Literacy. An Introduction* developed from Schirato and Yell's material for a first year teaching subject at Central Queensland University. It appears as part of the Australian Cultural Series, edited by John Tulloch and Terry Threadgold. It gives a good general overview of the field of Cultural Studies from an Australian perspective, with examples and discussion accessible to new students, whilst simultaneously providing suggestions for further reading, highlighting and reiterating essential theoretical concepts, and introducing some of the

vocabulary necessary to negotiate academic discourse.

#### References

Butler, J. 1993, *Bodies that Matter*. Routledge, New York

#### Pam Dickinson

#### Pauwels, Anne

*Cross-cultural communication in the health sciences: communicating with migrant patients*  
Macmillan, Melbourne, 1996

The reader audience of Pauwels' book is very clearly defined: the focus is on English-speaking health professionals and health care users from non-English-speaking backgrounds, the former ranging from medical practitioners, nurses and physiotherapists to psychologists and counsellors. The book's main aim is to identify potential and actual communication problems and to provide strategies for overcoming these problems. It is obviously intended as a very practical guide for health professionals in their dealings with health care users from diverse ethnolinguistic backgrounds.

Pauwels tackles this ambitious task by situating her topic within the theoretical framework of the relationship between communication, culture and language. In chapter one, her discussion of concepts such as verbal/non-verbal communication and culture revolves around aspects of conversational management (turn-taking and speech acts) on the one hand, and various dimensions of cultural variability on the other. Pauwels makes the point that "beliefs about illness and health ... are all shaped or influenced by the culture of the society in which they are found", emphasising the importance of the relationship between health care and culture. Chapter two describes the process of second language acquisition and stresses the differences between languages at morpho-syntactic and discourse levels with a view to sensitising health professionals to cultural variation in language use.

In the third chapter Pauwels highlights language and communication practices in health care, including a

discussion of patients' perspective on communication problems with health professionals. The discussion of these issues is enhanced by examples of naturally occurring exchanges drawn from databases published in the United States in the eighties, but I would have welcomed the inclusion of the health professionals' perception of communication problems. Chapter three concludes with some guidelines for dealing with communication complaints from patients, which seems to prepare readers for a closer investigation of actual communication problems. Instead, Pauwels returns to matters raised in previous chapters by presenting demographic data about language and culture from Australia in chapter four. My own cultural orientation towards the structure of written discourse may be at work here, but I felt that this chapter sequence constituted a break in the development of the discourse, and that the information about the Australian context would have been more appropriately placed in an earlier chapter.

Although chapter four seems a little disconnected, Pauwels' detailed discussion of the language situation in Australia, including aspects of bilingualism and code switching, provides health professionals with important information about the linguistic background of patients in Australia. It alerts them to the complex nature of certain language behaviours of their patients and sheds some light on the language difficulties experienced by elderly migrants. In this context, she raises the issue of using interpreters which then becomes the focus of chapter five. The importance of using interpreters when communicating with patients from non-English-speaking backgrounds cannot be stressed enough, but Pauwels also very sensibly discusses those situations where interpreters are not available. She presents some guidelines for working with interpreters and language assistants who are not qualified interpreters and investigates situations where health professionals are forced to use bilingual staff, or choose to communicate with patients in their own language.

Perhaps the most interesting chapter in the book is reserved until last, when Pauwels discusses aspects of communication with migrant patients through English. As the author points out, health professionals need to be aware not only of "what their patients say but also of how they say it". Chapter 6

then brings together some of the topics raised in previous chapters, exploring briefly the health professional-patient relationship, the connection between communication and cultural beliefs about health and illness, and presenting guidelines for dealing with communication problems. The remainder of the chapter is devoted to the identification of cultural and linguistic problems in obtaining information from patients and in giving instructions, providing clarification and explanations to patients. Given that for the most part, verbal medical interaction centres on such communicative routines and tasks, Pauwels' strategies for overcoming patients' reluctance to give information, for improving questioning techniques and for giving instructions to patients are certainly very useful for health professionals.

Throughout the work, Pauwels provides exercises for the reader at the end of each chapter. Unfortunately, the author does not provide any suggestions as to how they might be answered. Most readers of the book are likely to be laypeople in the field of cross-cultural communication and would surely benefit from some guidance here.

Pauwels states that the data for this book derive "largely from experiences of cross-cultural communication in Australia", yet all the examples of actual occurring speech are taken from databases published in the United States. This is probably due to the paucity of data available in Australia, but it nevertheless raises the question as to whether examples taken from the American context can be simply transposed to Australian medical settings. How, for instance, does the indifferent legal and financial reality of the American health system affect communication patterns between health care providers and users? Similarly, is it possible to generalise from one group of medical practitioners to another? Pauwels maintains that her guidelines and strategies are of equal value across the wide range of health professionals that she identifies as her principal readership. While various health practitioners undoubtedly share the communicative tasks of obtaining information and providing instructions, mental health professionals in particular whose treatment may be based exclusively on talk, could find the scope of Pauwels' strategies too limited.

The real strength of the book lies in its presentation of problematic cross-cultural communication in the health sector against a backdrop of sociolinguistic and second language acquisition theory. In *Cross-cultural communication in the health sciences* Pauwels manages, in a lucid and highly accessible way, to detail communication problems between health professionals and health care users and to provide clear guidelines and strategies for their resolution. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in cross-cultural and/or medical discourse in Australia.

Dr. Annette Harres