The book is designed to appeal to a wide readership: lawyers, linguists, language specialists, and students. Special emphasis is placed on those readers who wish to extend their theoretical background in linguistics and discourse analysis to practical applications of this analysis in a specific professional setting.

(Received 5 March 2009)


Reviewed by Mark Dingemanse

Language & Cognition group, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics
Postbus 310, 6500 AH Nijmegen, The Netherlands
mark.dingemanse@mpi.nl

The second edition of Deborah Tannen’s *Talking voices (TV)* is the same as the 1989 original except for an added introduction (pp. 8–24). This introduction situates *TV* in the context of intertextuality and gives a survey of relevant research since the book first appeared. I leave the task of praising this important book to the many reviewers of the 1989 edition and focus here on a thing or two that I found missing from that edition but also, to my surprise, from the new introduction.

First of all, there has always been a decidedly auditory focus to this book. While this may have been understandable in the 1980s (when most researchers had to rely on transcripts of tape-recorded conversations), it has become increasingly feasible to investigate discourse in all its multimodal glory with the help of video recordings and time-aligned annotation tools. Unfortunately, the introduction to the second edition does nothing to set the record straight in this respect, and thereby misses out on a lot of highly relevant research. One example is the large body of work by Adam Kendon, David McNeill and colleagues on gesture in natural conversations, which shows the importance of iconic co-speech gestures in supplying imagery and creating involvement.

Second, this work limits itself to various Anglophone ways of speaking (excepting some examples from Greek). One widespread linguistic resource that happens to be overlooked as a result of this limited perspective is ideophony. Ideophones are marked sound-symbolic words that vividly depict perceptions and sensations; they are found abundantly in many African, Asian, and Amerindian
BOOK NOTES

languages, where they occur profusely in daily conversation (see Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz [eds.], Ideophones, Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2001). A quick tour of TV’s chapters shows how relevant ideophones are to the themes of the book: Prime examples of the inextricable unity of sound and sense (chapter 2), ideophones are frequently reduplicated (chapter 3); they are often introduced in quotative-like structures to signal their depictive nature (chapter 4); and they supply vivid imagery and detail (chapter 5). All these features work together to create interpersonal involvement (chapter 2; see also Nuckolls, Sounds like life: Sound-symbolic grammar, performance, and cognition in Pastaza Quechua, New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

The strength of Tannen’s book lies in its insightful analysis of the auditory side of conversation. Yet talking voices have always been embedded in richly contextualized multimodal speech events. As spontaneous and pervasive involvement strategies, both iconic gestures and ideophones should be of central importance to the analysis of conversational discourse. Unfortunately, someone who picks up this second edition is pretty much left in the dark about the prevalence of these phenomena in everyday face-to-face interaction all over the world.

(Received 6 March 2009)


Reviewed by Zhong Hong
Faculty of English Language and Culture/Center for Linguistics and Applied Linguistics
Guangdong University of Foreign Studies
Guangzhou, 510420, P. R. China
gwzhonghong@126.com

As a rejoinder to Chomsky’s strong claim that language is an innate faculty, the volume under review is structured into parts A, B and C (“Introduction,” “Extension,” and “Exploration”) plus a preface, providing a platform for readers to know about, to think along with great minds about, and to inquire on their own about the social nature of language and interaction. The nine topics introduced in the nine units of Part A, serving as foundation, are repeated respectively in Parts B and C with gradually increasing depth. The preface summarizes the main ideas of the book, traces the origin of the core concept of “discursive practice,” and advises how to use this book.

Unit A1, “Language and social interaction,” opens with the claim that the study of how an individual speaker uses language at a definite time in a particular place with other unique individuals for some specific purpose has been extensively investigated