A Select Bibliography

Barbara Conture and Patricia Stock

Contains lectures Austin delivered at Harvard in 1955. The book is most useful to the student of speech-act theory who wishes to become familiar with the birth and early development of the theory. Austin's lectures are at times redundant, and they are sometimes difficult to follow. Yet, by reading them, the reader is able to gain an appreciation for the concerns which led to the development of the theory as well as a sense of the issues the theory addresses.

The proceedings of The National Invitational Symposium in the King Decision, sponsored by the Wayne State University Center for Black Studies. The conference was held from 21-23 February 1980.


Presents the Schools Council Research Project scheme for categorizing written discourse according to the audience for whom it is intended and according to function.

Booth, Wayne C., “The Rhetorical Stance,” College Composition and Communication, 14, no. 3 (Oct., 1963), 141.

Booth argues for teaching rhetoric because he believes effective writing is produced when writers assume a balanced rhetorical stance – a stance which gives weight to the subject matter of their writing, the audience for their writing, and their own voices.


Describes narratives produced by individuals in different cultures responding to the same stimulus.


Develops a theory of sentence composing based on an analysis of the structure of “cumulative” sentences.


Articles in this volume focus on (1) the status of the performative hypothesis of speech-act theory (Davidson, Ross, Stame); (2) problems affecting the status of the hypothesis (Cole, Fraser, Green, Searle); (3) the proper treatment of conversational implicature in speech-act theory (Grice, Wright, Garner); and (4) the problem of indirect speech-acts (Cole, Fraser, Gordon and Lakoff, Green, Morgan, Sadock, Schmerling, Searle). It is an excellent source of information about speech-act theory, providing the broadest overview of the current state of work in the area available.


Defines discourse analysis, summarizes a range of research analyzing spoken and written texts and describes implications for teaching.

Describes and applies a method for making descriptive comparisons of the features of spoken and written texts.


Describes a developmental process for writing and a method of learning to write without a teacher. Elbow advocates that groups of interested writers work together, critiquing each other’s work.


Suggests that writing enables interaction between thinking and language which promotes discovery of new knowledge.


A commonsense, readable reaction to Searle’s analysis of non-idiomatic indirect speech acts. Fish maintains that constraints on speech acts inhere, not in language, but in situations. For this reason, Fish believes that there are no inherent constraints on the meanings a sentence may have and that understanding among us is not only possible, but usual.
Posits that each work of literature is a defense against the death of language, a continuous contribution to an endless "work." The Library.

A study of violence in television programming.

Explores the effects of literacy upon peoples and cultures.

Series of essays about the development of literacy.

Presents a functional theory of language and defines, in simple terms, the situational constraints of field, tenor and mode as they mark varieties of discourse.

Argues that language in scientific discourse tells what the writer is going to do or what he has just done and does not overtly disclose the writer's intent.

Describes ways of knowing in oral cultures.

Describes indexes of maturity in writing and defines and defends the T-unit as a measure of syntactic fluency.

A study of negotiation patterns based at The University of Michigan.

Demonstrates that good student writers make use of a writing "monitor" to help them assess the appropriateness of writing at "micro" and "macro" levels; proposes that teachers make the writing class a place for "monitor" building.

Describes language variety as correlated with social status of individuals.

Describes similarities in structures of narratives told by a variety of people.

Describes mnemonic structures by which bards recall and relate poetry.

Describes Mellon's first sentence-combining experiments and summarizes previous research on measuring and improving syntactic fluency.

Claims that the ability to draw conclusions from stated premises is unique to "literate" thinking.

A series of essays extending the thesis Father Ong posits in Presence of the Word.

An abridged version of this article is printed in this issue of forum.

A cultural history of the west in terms of the organization of the human sensory system as it responds to the predominant media of each age.

Explains revision as a two-phase sequence in which the writer reviews a draft first, to clarify ideas and second, to adjust writing for readers.


English Journal, 54 (1965) 300-09.

Negation in Detroit Suburban Speech," unpublished ms.

A study of negotiation patterns based at The University of Michigan.

"Learning an Acquisition: Two Paths to Writing." English Education, ll (1979), 83-90

Explains revision as a two-phase sequence in which the writer reviews a draft first, to clarify ideas and second, to adjust writing for readers.
Plato criticizes "handbook" and "sophistic" rhetoric; he calls for the formulation of a philosophical rhetoric. As he does so, Plato worries about the effects of literacy on the fabric of society.


A collection of essays which represent a continuation of the line of research explained in Searle's volume *Speech Acts* (1969). They explore particular problems for the theory: metaphor, fiction, indirect speech acts, etc.


If one wants to read just one work on speech-act theory, this is the volume to read. Searle explains the theory, enriches it with helpful examples, and imbeds it in a meaningful context.


Argues that "style" has no place in the composition class; teachers must emphasize "control" instead and help students overcome limited resources.


Categorizes and interprets syntactic differences between speech and writing.


A collection of essays which explore the relationships between spoken and written language.


Vygotsky explores the intersection of thought and language by analyzing the dynamic nature of children's understanding of word meaning.