



## British Association for Applied Linguistics

### BAAL Book Prize 2008

The 2008 BAAL book prize was awarded to:

**Pennycook, Alastair (2007)**  
*Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*  
Routledge

The titles short-listed for the 2008 BAAL Book Prize are:

Cohen, Andrew & Ernesto Macaro (eds) (2007)  
*Language Learner Strategies*  
Oxford University Press

Coulthard, Malcolm & Alison Johnson (2007)  
*An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics*  
Routledge

Montgomery, Martin (2007)  
*The Discourse of Broadcast News*  
Routledge

### Reviewers' Comments

#### **Pennycook, Alastair (2007) *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, Routledge - first review**

Every now and again comes the opportunity to review a book whose every page moves one's thinking to another space, whose arguments are ring so true that you wonder why you didn't think of them, and whose style makes reading such a pleasure that putting the book down to pick up another task becomes difficult. Alastair Pennycook's recent book *Global Englishes, Transcultural Flows* is one such volume. Broad in its scope with its discussion of globalization, yet local with its situated focus on hiphop and popular culture, the book offers complex swirls around key debates regarding globalization: Is it driven by an expanding market? Does it make the world more homogeneous? What is its role in local events? How does English sit in relation to the world's other languages? Is the term globalization itself becoming a global cliché?

At the end of the twentieth century, the word "globalization" became an all-purpose catchword in public and scholarly debate. Poorer countries decried its invasive onslaught and capitalizing of cheap labour, business people in more well-to-do countries justified downsizing companies to send their businesses overseas, and advocates of indigenous peoples world over lamented the destruction of smaller cultures. While many of the issues around globalization are still burning issues, provoking heated and vehement arguments, there is within Applied Linguistics a very palpable sense of the role that

English learning and teaching has to play in the general diffusing tendencies associated with global surges. It is this crucial issue that informs Pennycook's new book.

This thoughtfully written volume is a response to a host of burning questions relating to our shrinking world. Pennycook gets at these concerns by directing English language teachers and researchers to consider global Englishes in relation to 'transcultural flows,' by which he means "ways in which cultural forms move, change, and are reused to fashion new identities in diverse contexts," and one form by which flows seem to be refashioning cultures is through hip-hop. The appropriation and global spread of this music form—the fact that its African American traditions are being assumed by speakers of other languages in different cultures—points at once to a key point that Pennycook makes throughout his book, namely that its form, lyrics, styles, body movements, performances and orientations are about its floatability, its ability to 'trans' (from the Latin 'tra' meaning to 'across,' 'beyond') and shift and assume local incarnations. Whether it is Kaneka music in Calcedonia, Libreville rap or Aboriginal rap, the flows around and between English and other languages open up domains beyond fluid identities and performances to probe at the edges of some cherished sociolinguistic domains of creoles. Often addressed in terms of its linguistic features (what elements of which languages get appropriated, mixed, fused), Pennycook's focus on rap shows us how creoles may actually be the "model for a new era of globalization and worldliness."

The book works wonderfully as a research text in graduate seminars. I've been using it as a textbook in an MA-TESOL class (on academic literacy and world Englishes) with an accompanying reading packet, and the combination of Pennycook's trenchant arguments about Englishes and global surges along with very localized readings--on fatal miscommunication in aviation contexts, English competing with local languages in Peru, class-related issues around English appropriation in the Phillipines or accent-reduction classes for call-center workers in India--has stimulated some very provocative discussions. Students' comments range from: "I love the ease of the writing", to "I never thought of ELT in relation to hiphop and popular culture," with all of them (including novice teachers) intuiting the primary purposes of the book, namely to broaden the bases on which English is conceptualized, to connect it to issues in cultures that humans relate to, to revel in the diffusion of English, since diffusion points to engagements, localizations, appropriations and change.

Issues about globalization, globalizing, globalism, globality, globalness and their accompanying polarities (localization, localizing, localism, locality, localness) are sometimes impossibly difficult to write about because they are steeped in issues of perception, access, cultural cross-overs, economics, national identities, and borders. Academic projects often emerge out of the attempt to render the unintelligible and overly complex coherent. At some level, though, thinking about globalization and global Englishes involves an opposite process, a process of startling the obvious into a discourse then exposing its complexities without obscuring its immediacy through undue abstraction. Pennycook's volume in speaking to the globalizing and localizing of English(es) while also interrogating the very categories by which we understand these terms achieves this delicate balance with supreme finesse and panache.

I regard this book as one of the foremost publications of the year, and most enthusiastically recommend the book being shortlisted for the BAAL prize.

**Pennycook, Alastair (2007) *Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows*, Routledge – second review**

*Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows* by Alastair Pennycook's is a remarkable work that challenges the boundaries of both applied linguistic and sociolinguistic analysis while addressing issues in the philosophy of language, and identity. At first glance, it is an unassuming work that seems relatively straightforward: "to locate the spread and use of English within critical theories of globalization." Yet Pennycook quickly clarifies that he prefers to locate *Global Englishes* within a more complex vision of globalization. "This

view seeks to understand the role of English both critically – in terms of new forms of power, control and destruction – and in its complexity – in terms of new forms of resistance, change, appropriation and identity. It suggests that we need to move beyond arguments about homogeneity or heterogeneity, or imperialism and nation states, an instead focus on translocal and transcultural flows.” In 158 pages he examines global hip-hop and tackles arguments in linguistics, philosophy, psychology, philosophical linguistics and cultural theory. *Global Englishes* critically analyzes issues in linguistics, identity and race theories, transnational arguments and globalization. Rather than an unassuming little blue book, it is an intense, brilliantly conceived and complex work that demands that applied linguistic and sociolinguistic research and methodology include a critical understanding of philosophical, identity and political theory.

*Global Englishes* is organized into eight chapters. I will discuss the first three in some detail since they provide the foundation of his argument throughout. Chapter 1 “Hip hop be connectin’” describes and analyzes the world-wide spread of hip-hop, the use of English, especially African American English, and the political and social implications of the influence of hip hop on cultures outside of the US. The author explores the complexity of language imperialism and reveals that the actual relationship between English, hip hop and cultures throughout the world is far more complicated. He argues that, for example in Malaysia, hip hop “is not a recognizable part of African American culture, or global culture, nor is it easily located within Malaysian traditions.” In order to represent the complex nature of hip hop in a global context, he argues that one should look at language and culture in terms of ‘fluidity’, which refers to the movement and flows of music across time and space, and ‘fixity’, which refers to ways in which music is about location, tradition, cultural expression (Connell and Gibson, 2003).

Chapter 2, “Other Englishes”, is a thorough and well-argued critique of theories of globalization. Here, Pennycook is critical of concentric models of English and the binary of World versus Global Englishes. He argues that “At the very least, we need to understand how English is involved in global flows of culture and knowledge, how English is used and appropriated by users of English around the world, how English colludes with multiple domains of globalization, from popular culture to unpopular politics, from international capital to local transaction, from ostensible diplomacy to purported peace-keeping, from religious proselytizing to secular resistance, while simultaneously reiterating the existence of English as if it were an issue not in doubt.” He is trying to make sense of numerous theories of globalization of English that continue to privilege Western and colonial roles and standards in language varieties. He argues that these theories do not explain the importance of hip-hop and are equally limited to describe other situations like creole languages. He convincingly demonstrates that World Englishes leaves out all varieties that do not fit the paradigm of an emergent national standard.

Chapter Three, “Transgressive Theories” is the heart of the book. It is here that Pennycook puts forward his theory that hip hop may be seen as a set of transgressive semiotic practices. ‘Trans’ means to not only to cross over, but questions ontologies on which definitions rest (e.g. Butler 2004). In his critique of Saussure and Peirce in particular, he demonstrates how the binary nature of the sign and signifier, iconicity and indexicality are problematic. He writes: “we need a different version of the sign that locates the sign in physical space and human interaction, making language use central to a concept of meaning.” He concludes that he is arguing for a “transgressive theory, as a necessary way of dealing with a transgressive form such as hip-hop, as an approach that takes us beyond the ‘posts’ and the ‘critical’, and as an overarching framework that pulls together numerous ‘trans’ concepts (transculturation, translation, transtextuality, transmodality).”

In Chapter 4 through 8, Pennycook critiques work on performance and performativity, vernacular theory, hip-hop pedagogies and more. Pennycook describes hip hop as a crucial site of both identity and desire. He suggests that the transcultural circuits of flow render “the United States a peripheral rather than a major influence on hip-hop

adaptations." Yet this argument, while critical, is not as convincing as Pennycook hopes. The review of hip hop is thorough regarding the cultural theorists who have examined hip hop outside of the US. An area that is neglected, however, are thorough critiques of theories about African American language, race, politics and culture. He leans toward arguments much like cultural theorists and ethnomusicologists (e.g. Paul Gilroy, Tony Mitchell) who provide exclusively ideological arguments that African American influence is not significant in the description of local and global varieties of hip hop. Of course for a linguist, the argument should bring a fresh perspective on the language, discourse and language ideology of American hip-hop. While Pennycook alludes to the possibility that there is more to mine here, he relies too much on his non-linguist colleagues in his analysis of language ideology and style norms in the global context

Alastair Pennycook has written one of the strongest arguments detailing the importance of applied linguistic in explaining and leading us to an understanding of the movements that are ongoing throughout the world. His command of hip-hop culture and linguistic and cultural theory has resulted in a significant work for those who study language and popular culture and youth in general.

**Cohen, Andrew & Ernesto Macaro (eds) (2007) *Language Learner Strategies*, Oxford University Press - first review**

The book is a unique multi-authored volume of works by the leading researchers in language learner strategy (LLS) research. It contains rigorous contributions from these LLS researchers who are serious about the book's mission and objectives. More than a descriptive story of LLS research, the book not only provides an insightful and self-critical account of LLS research but also outlines the areas and issues for future LLS research.

The first part of the book deals with various issues, theories and frameworks (including methodological ones) in LLS research. In the first chapter, Grenfell and Macaro squarely address mounting critiques concerning LLS research's earlier claims and attempt to map out future directions in LLS research. Cohen's survey of experts' views on LLS research is a particularly interesting chapter as experts' views are often a source of dissonance in many fields but are rarely subject to close examination as such. Oxford and Schramm's and Takeuchi et al.'s chapters help resolve the tensions in LLS research using different paradigms (sociocultural or cognitive) or having different foci (individual or contextual). White et al.'s chapter on research methodology offers a much deeper critical examination than any other chapters on LLS research methods in previous publications. Oxford et al.'s chapter on grammar strategies is an important reminder that considerable effort is needed to explore the often neglected area of learners' grammar strategy. Rubin et al.'s chapter on the intervention in the use of strategies reviews current practice in strategy-based instruction (SBI) and highlights the importance of teacher education in SBI.

The second part of the book contains systematic reviews of three decades of research in specific strategy areas, such as reading and writing strategies. It may be the first time for LLS researchers to review strategy research in such a systematic manner. Each review chapter has a particular focus. For instance, in the chapter on reading strategies, the focus is on the impact of first language while in the chapter on communication strategies focuses on two research perspectives (interactionist and psycholinguistic). The reviews can give readers a quick overview of important themes in LLS research in these areas. Each review chapter also ends with a critical examination of shortcomings in the studies reviewed and practical suggestions for further research. For example, after reviewing progress in vocabulary strategy research, Nyikos and Fan recommend that future research adopt a longitudinal approach in future vocabulary strategy research.

I personally found that the book is a pleasant read, unlike many other academic books. It is also challenging and thought-provoking. I began the reading with doubts about the future of LLS research as LLS researchers are faced with too many unsolvable problems these days. When I finished reading the book, I had changed my pessimistic assessment of LLS research and came to believe that much more needs to be done in LLS research.

It is my belief that those who are interested in LLS research, including postgraduate students and researchers, will find the book particularly useful as a reference and a reservoir of research ideas. The book may be considered one of the best published works on LLS research so far. In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the book to be short listed and even recommended for the prize.

**Coulthard, Malcolm & Alison Johnson (2007) *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics*, Routledge - first review**

Both Vicki Pollard and Tony Blair have attracted the attention of linguists in recent years; however, this is probably the only book in the BAAL Book Prize which will explicitly and with a straight face provide examples of the similarities between the talk of these two! The confidence and elegance with which it does so offer a constructive and accessible way into the book.

From the moment this book opens, with presentation of a range of high-profile and definitive case summaries which depart from media reports, to the moment it closes, with consideration of the effective communication of forensic linguistic evidence using specific examples, it keeps a tight focus on timely issues which will stimulate and engage readers. This is balanced throughout with avoidance of sensationalism and a stated awareness of and respect for the human lives discussed in case reports.

This is a highly readable, beautifully crafted book which appears at exactly the right time to make its wide-ranging discussion useful to linguists in the classroom as they present forensic linguistics to students, in the seminar room as they discuss the sub-discipline with colleagues and in police stations and courts as linguists explain themselves to those who they come into contact with if they give evidence and advice to legal professionals.

It is easy to navigate and the chapter and sub-section divisions are sensible and helpful. Perhaps the only confusing point in this regard is the unnumbered first chapter; the second chapter is labelled "Chapter 1". Once noticed, however, this is easily assimilated by the reader.

The book will be invaluable in undergraduate teaching, especially in the UK but also overseas, predominantly in the US and Australia, I suspect. It fills a hole in the literature in that it provides a single point of reference on a wide range of topics and presents them in a way which is accessible to the advanced undergraduate audience. On the whole linguistic and legal terms and concepts are introduced at an appropriate point and explained in a constructive way. There are a few terms and concepts, both legal and linguistic, which I suspect would cause problems for even advanced undergraduates and would therefore require further explanation from tutors but within the confines of such a wide-ranging, book-length study this is neither surprising nor particularly negative as it will give points for engagement. The further readings and 'research tasks' suggested at the end of each chapter are entirely appropriate and have obviously been selected with respect to accessibility and do-ability in mind. The tasks in particular are likely to be easy to adapt to different teaching circumstances and indeed undergraduate and postgraduate are likely to be able to develop on the tasks themselves. Many projects and dissertations will set sail from these pages I suspect.

The book is highly original and creative in its use of examples, literature and argument. The experience and background of both authors are apparent on every page and no doubt an influence on the focus and organisation.

No two chapters are the same here. For example some are concerned predominantly with literature review and others are more concerned with the presentation of data and examples. Whilst this might be addling in other books, here it is a strength, both indicating the diversity of the sub-discipline of Forensic Linguistics and providing different reading activities and points of engagement for readers.

One potential weakness of the book is its construction in two parts each written in the main by its two authors working separately. Differences in the two parts are apparent both in structure, wording and level, focus, purpose and originality. However this is not a problem for the text as the two parts nonetheless complement each other along each point of difference and clearly play to each author's strengths. The authors indeed turn the division to their advantage through a charming and entertaining move in which they ask readers to consider authorship of each chapter as a forensic exercise. This is typical of the light-hearted but appropriate tone of this volume and the provision of an on-line discussion of possible answers to this riddle is typical of the care and attention to detail which underpin this whole exercise.

A weakness which is not, for me, resolved is the mismatch between the book's claimed focus on discourse analysis, expressed in various places (e.g. pps 7-8, pps 14-16) and its actual contents. Whilst discourse analysis is the book's predominant focus, forensic phonetics also received a whole chapter of attention and the place of this topic within a book which professes a discourse analytic approach is not explained nor even mentioned. It is necessary for books at this level to cut across disciplinary/sub-disciplinary boundaries like this but it would have been interesting to see the authors acknowledging and exploring this mismatch in general and in relation to their claimed discourse analytic focus. The book also presents the discourse analytic focus in terms of "tools" and the linguistic "toolkit" but could devote more attention to the minutiae of selections from that toolkit. There seems to be an unspoken assumption that the appropriate tool will be self-evident and it would have been useful for the authors to get into this area which is one of the major challenges of analysing any text, particularly if the analysis might be used in a legal setting.

There are a few terminological points of concern such as a slightly confusing use of "expert witness" (p33) and of "statistically significant" (p25). There is also a slight lack of orientation and explicit connection between chapters and the book's two parts. I would also have been pleased to see some sort of concluding chapter which would bring things together and perhaps look to the future in a different way from the current final chapter.

Perhaps the major strength of this book, for me, is that I could very easily envisage it dropping straight into my teaching without me having to totally rewrite my courses or mangle the text. This is testament to the organisation, exemplification and timely topic coverage of the book. It is presumably no accident that the book has 10 chapters (plus the aforementioned introduction) and would therefore map onto many 10-week undergraduate courses as well as providing an initial 'pre-course' reading.

It is heartening to see a book on this aspect of applied linguistics in the BAAL Book Prize competition. The presence of this particular book which gives attention to 'old hands' and young scholars, treating the contributions of all with seriousness and care is particularly appropriate to an organisation which also facilitates and indeed celebrates such diversity.

**Coulthard, Malcolm & Alison Johnson (2007) *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics*, Routledge - second review**

Coulthard and Johnson's 2007 book, *An Introduction to Forensic Linguistics: Language in Evidence*, is a substantial and welcome contribution to the available resources for introducing students and other readers to the rapidly growing field of forensic linguistics. It will serve as a very useful textbook for students from many backgrounds, both because of its clarity and comprehensiveness and because of its frequent reference to introductory work in fields like discourse analysis, which may not be familiar to some students using the book. The book is, in other words, an excellent introductory textbook that presents a clear and coherent view of the field and also points readers to other useful resources.

The range of topics covered in the book is detailed and contextualised in the introduction, which also gives a brief overview of the history of the field. Following the introduction, chapters are divided into two sections. Part I deals with the language of legal process, while Part II presents contexts in which language is in some way in evidence in legal cases. The legal process is described and illustrated, and the role of the linguist as expert witness is addressed both throughout chapters in Part II and also in the concluding chapter.

Each well-organised and highly readable chapter begins with a brief overview of its topic, then presents both appropriate examples with analysis and challenges (in the form of either chapter exercises or appended "Research Tasks") for the student or other reader. In terms of course use, it is helpful that some Research Tasks (in later chapters) are designed to be completed by teams of students.

Throughout the text, the authors include helpful cross-referencing, helpful (permanent) URLs for useful websites, and explanation of issues in a number of high-profile cases. They are also careful to distinguish UK law and practice from U.S. law and practice. The references and index are helpful, though additional proofing may have been in order.

Overall, I give the books high marks on most criteria for the usual reasons (the qualities listed above). I give it highest marks for originality because of its composition as a textbook that will be useful to students both as a solid introduction to the field and as a pathway to additional study and methods of analysis.

### **Montgomery, Martin (2007) *The Discourse of Broadcast News*, Routledge - first review**

The originality of *The Discourse of Broadcast News* may not be immediately apparent from its title. Montgomery's book is narrower in focus than books on the language of news, and takes on a broader genre context than books on interviews or broadcast talk. By defining his topic in this way, he can make new connections between a broad framework of the order of discourse of broadcast news and the details of linguistic analysis.

Reports in the print media are more often studied by linguists, because they are easier to collect and work with, but as Montgomery points out, far more people in the UK and US get their regular news from broadcast media. And broadcast news is fundamentally different, because it is not subject to the user's control, as one might skim a newspaper glancing at the headlines and reading some stories. It comes in a flow of images and words, so the structure of that flow is particularly important, the way stories are titled, separated from other stories, and assembled, so that an apparently bewildering sequence of studio shots, talking heads, exotic backgrounds, and video clips all seems to fit together.

Montgomery is particularly good on aspects of UK broadcasting that have changed over the last twenty years, including the opening graphics, the style of presentation, the studios, and the construction of stories. One form that has emerged in that time is the live two-way interview, in which the newsreader or anchor talks to an editor or reporter in the field. This gives a sense of immediacy and global reach; it also suggests a conversational, informal tone. But it has its hazards, in its hybrid of scripted and improvised talk, as he shows in his very clear analysis of the famous John Humphrys - Andrew Gilligan interview about the 'sexed up' Iraq dossier. With the Hutton Inquiry, this must be the most thoroughly discussed three minutes of talk in broadcast history, but Montgomery manages to bring out issues that were missed or muddled in the thousands of pages of testimony.

Another aspect that has changed is the spatial arrangement of the news, both in its literal sense, the layout of the studio, and in a metaphorical sense, the way we think of news being out there. Montgomery distinguishes two dimensions of news: 'the axis of reporting, along which the world is brought to the studio . . . and the axis of presentation

- along which the news is presented to the audience' (77). The axis of reporting has been transformed by the technology of satellite broadcasting and digital cameras, and the competition of 24-hour news channels, so there is now more emphasis on breaking news and liveness. There has also been a change in the axis of projection, for instance in the relation of the newsreader to the audience, shown e.g. in the way they may now stand and move around in the middle of a large space with projections behind them.

Montgomery is particularly good at analysis of the visual and the verbal. For instance, he shows with examples how viewers interpret the spoken words in relation to the images, and scrutinize the images for signs relevant to the words, crucially assisted by overlapping edits that assure us that the two are to be read together. He gives an account of the difficulties of double presenters in mid shots in big studios (what do you look at when you aren't talking?) that actually made me laugh out loud on a train.

But the book is, as the subtitle says, 'a linguistic approach'. There are detailed analyses of the present tense in headline (he shows it's not historic present), of the intonation of links between stories (wonderfully described as 'a rallentando effect'), of hedging and factivity in the interviews (what he calls the 'push-pull' of softening and intensifying discourse markers), and a whole page on 'just'. There is a useful application of Membership Categorisation Devices to broadcast headlines (they work best when the action seems inconsistent with the actor). The book will have linguistic insights even for readers who are not particularly interested in broadcast news.

From the title and blurb, I had expected a textbook reviewing other studies, and it is accessible and comprehensive enough to be read by undergraduates. But it is an original contribution, and there is not one routine chapter in the book.

### BAAL Book Prize 2008 List of Books Received

<b>author(s)/editor(s)</b>	<b>title</b>	<b>publisher</b>
Auer, Peter and Li Wei (eds)	Handbook of Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication	Mouton de Gruyter
Beal, Joan, Corrigan, Karen and Hermann Moisl (eds)	Creating and digitizing language corpora vol 1: synchronic databases	Palgrave
Beal, Joan, Corrigan, Karen and Hermann Moisl (eds)	Creating and digitizing language corpora vol 2: diachronic databases	Palgrave
Bloor, Merial and Bloor, Thomas	The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis	Hodder Arnold
Dörnyei, Zoltán	Research Methods in Applied Linguistics	Oxford University Press
Duchene, Alexandre and Monica Heller	Discourses of Endangerment	Continuum
Honda, Maya and Wayne O'Neil	Thinking Linguistically: a scientific approach to language	Blackwell
Jenkins, Jennifer	English as a Lingua Franca: attitude and identity	Oxford University Press
Johnson, Sally and Astrid Esslin (eds)	Language in the Media	Continuum
Lamy, Marie-Noelle and Regine Hampel	Online communication in language learning and teaching	Palgrave
McColl Millar, Robert (ed.)	Trask's Historical Linguistics, 2 <sup>nd</sup> ed.	Hodder Arnold
Mendoza-Denton, Norma	Homegirls: language and cultural practice among Latina youth gangs	Blackwell
Montgomery, Martin	The Discourse of Broadcast News	Routledge

O'Keeffe, Anne, Michael McCarthy and Ronald Carter	From Corpus to Classroom	Cambridge University Press
Pennycook, Alastair	Global Englishes and Transcultural Flows	Routledge
Samuda, Virginia and Martin Bygate	Tasks in second language learning	Palgrave
Sinclair, John and Anna Mauranen	Linear Unit Grammar: integrating speech and writing	Benjamins
Soler, Eva Alcón and Maria Pilar Safont Jorda (eds)	Intercultural Language Use and Language Learning	Springer