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(Received 5 February 2007)

Language in Society 37 (2008). Printed in the United States of America
 doi: 10.1017/S0047404508080603

DEBORAH SCHIFFRIN, *In other words: Variation in reference and narrative*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. Pp. xvi, 373. Pb \$39.99

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Using “reference” in its broadest sense, Schiffrin states that *In other words: Variation in reference and narrative* is about “how we redo references to both entities and events” (p. xii) – that is, “how speakers resolve tensions between continuity (saying the ‘same thing’) and change (adapting the ‘same thing’) to new circumstances.” This enables the author to bring together in one book analyses of both micro (grammatical) and macro (event sequences) features of discourse.

The book is divided into nine chapters, which can be read independently or in sequence as a whole. The two main foci are referrals and narratives, the former defined by Schiffrin as “the use of referring expressions to evoke a referent,” and the latter as “the use of event clauses to tell a story” (13). The chapters are divided between these foci, with chaps. 2 through 4 mainly concerned with referrals, chaps. 5 and 8 with both referrals and narrative, and chaps. 6 and 7 with narrative. The analysis is restricted to “second position referrals,” which Schiffrin defines as when a speaker “makes a referral and then redoes all (or part) of that referral, or tells a story and then replays all (or some) of that story” (13). Recurrences in second position include repairing (chaps. 2, 3, 4, 8), repeating, paraphrasing and altering (chaps. 2, 3, 4, 5, 8), reframing (chap. 6) and restructuring (chaps. 7, 8).

The first chapter introduces variation analysis within the linguistic paradigm as a major means of studying different ways of saying the same thing. Schiffrin provides an excellent overview of the study of variation, acknowledging that variation analysis is problematic in that what counts as “the same thing” cannot always be as objectively defined at other levels as at the level of phoneme. As she further observes, analysis of variation beyond the grammatical or phonolog-

ical levels is not for the faint-hearted. She then further defines what variation is and how it may be investigated beyond a traditional Labovian quantitative approach, building on a version of variation analysis that alters and extends some traditional and methodological practices (7), tracing this back to a previous book (Schiffrin 1994, chap. 8). Outlining two approaches to research in discourse variation, the first focusing on language use in context and the second focusing on particular forms, meanings, or uses, Schiffrin states that she takes the second approach.

Chaps. 2, 3, and 4 display how variation analysis can be applied to recurrences of noun phrases that are examined as examples of problematic referrals. More specifically, chap. 2 examines repair by looking at what happens to the referent and the referring expression in four types of problematic referrals. The positions of these problematic referrals are then analyzed within the sentence and the interaction. In chap. 3 Schiffrin discusses the self-interruption and self-continuation of articles as examples of anticipating referrals. This chapter looks at switched and repeated articles, then discusses in more depth repeated articles (*H- How- how many in the- the crowd?* [27]), with particular reference to constraints upon such repetitions. Chap. 4 shows what happens when a noun phrase is not used to remedy cases of problematic referrals. In these cases self-completion is often effected by a complex sentence with faulty familiarity assumptions being remedied by grounding the referent in information that is familiar to the listener. Schiffrin shows that there is a set of formulaic ways to do this (pragmatic prototypes) when no self-repair has been attempted. In chap. 5 (“Referring sequences”) Schiffrin brings together the two foci of the book, referring expressions and narratives, to analyze possible genre constraints on noun-pronoun variation in narratives and lists. Chap. 6 (“Reframing experience”) and chap. 7 (“Retelling a story”) move on to examine four retellings of one failed plan of escape by a Holocaust survivor. Here, I believe, Schiffrin finds an important gap in narrative research, “the scholarly neglect of vicarious experience” (205) and the changes that occur in the retelling of one story over a period of 13 years. In the four versions of the same story Schiffrin examines both self and other experience in terms of footing and stance. While all four versions of the story were recorded for oral history projects about the Holocaust, two were recorded in the 1980s and two in the 1990s. Schiffrin notes that in the last two tellings the availability of a new public discourse about the Holocaust appears to have provided a template into which Susan Beer, the narrator, could fit her experience, leading to changes in stance and footing. Chap. 8 examines “recurrent referents within recurrent narratives,” and chap. 9 summarizes the author’s findings across the whole book.

The conceptual frame of *In other words* is clearly delineated, and Schiffrin appears at pains to ensure that readers understand why she has brought these analyses together under one title, reminding the reader of the goals of the book throughout, and repeatedly restating how the content of each chapter is related to

her general themes of innovation/fixity, sameness/difference, and old/new. She lays out both how she has classified reference, and how these classifications continually overlap, making us aware of the common problem for writers and researchers who are obliged to classify and categorize for the sake of making themselves understood, but at the same time realize that this is, after all, just a simplified frame which belies what is actually a complex overlapping of those very categories. I admire Schiffrin's honesty in acknowledging this mental battle. Perhaps her funny but illustrative autobiographical anecdote (xi) characterizing herself as a Lumper (one who focuses on similarities) rather than a Splitter (one who focuses on differences) may also explain why it may be more difficult for some to see similarity where she does.

As Schiffrin herself suggests in the preface (xiv), *In other words* brings together in one work many of her research interests throughout her academic life. In fact, the book, like a narrative, may be seen as "the fitting together of experiences across time into an explanatory system in which the 'self' appears as a consistent and organized whole" (205). The publication of *In other words* is also timely, given that very few monographs have been published in recent years on variation in discourse (e.g., Macaulay 1991, Johnstone 1994). *In other words* is therefore an invaluable reference (no pun intended) for scholars and graduate students. The book is not really appropriate for undergraduate classes, although an undergraduate conducting research for a thesis on reference could probably follow it. While one of Schiffrin's many strengths is her fine-grained and detailed analysis of language and texts, this may sometimes make the book less accessible, as readers may have to strive to recall the more general points that the details are supporting. Similarly, although Schiffrin provides excellent overviews of the necessary background research and information concerning the concepts, theories, and models of analysis with which she works, for a less experienced scholar this may be overwhelming. The reader needs to be able to master the metalanguage, a variety of models of analysis, and the transcription keys used. Considering the breadth of subdisciplines within linguistics on which this work draws, however (pragmatics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, narrative analysis, conversation analysis), the book is an impressive testimony to a scholar whose research spans different levels of language using a variety of linguistic approaches.

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(Received 19 February 2007)