

The Anthropology of Language: An Introduction to Linguistic Anthropology


By Harriet Joseph Ottenheimer


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Ottenheimer's authoritative yet approachable introduction to the field's methodology, skills, techniques, tools, and applications emphasizes the kinds of questions that anthropologists ask about language and the kinds of questions that intrigue students. The text brings together the key areas of linguistic anthropology, addressing issues of power, race, gender, and class throughout. Further stressing the everyday relevance of the text material, Ottenheimer includes "In the Field" vignettes that draw you in to the chapter material via stories culled from her own and others' experiences, as well as "Doing Linguistic Anthropology" and "Cross-Language Miscommunication" features that describe real-life applications of text concepts.

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Editorial Review

Review

"The writing style is one of the greatest strengths of this book. The author hits all the key terms needed for an introductory linguistic anthropology course, and her writing style is accessible, engaging, and at times quite humorous. I especially appreciate her ability to inject humor into some rather dry structural linguistic topics."

"I find Ottenheimer's The Anthropology of Language an extremely useful textbook as a very accessible introduction to linguistic anthropology for lower-division undergraduates. Its range and depth strikes a good balance for those first being introduced to an anthropological approach to language."

About the Author

Harriet Joseph Ottenheimer, professor emeritus of anthropology at Kansas State University, received a B.A. at Bennington College and a Ph.D. at Tulane University. She has taught linguistic anthropology for over 30 years. Her research interests include music, language, and other creative and performative expressions, particularly in African American and African cultures. In addition to extended periods of field research in New Orleans and the Comoro Islands, Dr. Ottenheimer has traveled and lectured widely throughout many other parts of the world. She has special interests in blues, autobiography, transcription, dictionary construction, fieldwork ethics, and ethnicity. Among her publications are COUSIN JOE: BLUES FROM NEW ORLEANS (with Pleasant "Cousin Joe" Joseph), a blues singer's autobiography; THE HISTORICAL DICTIONARY OF THE COMORO ISLANDS (with Martin Ottenheimer), an encyclopedia; MUSIC OF THE COMORO ISLANDS: DOMONI (also with Martin Ottenheimer), in vinyl, cassette, and CD formats; and SHINZWANI-ENGLISH/ENGLISH-SHINZWANI DICTIONARY, a bilingual, bidirectional dictionary. She has taught at the University of New Orleans, at Charles University in Prague (on a visiting Fulbright appointment), and at Kansas State University. At KSU she was the founding director of the interdisciplinary American Ethnic Studies Program, teaching introductory and advanced courses in that program, as well as in cultural and linguistic anthropology. Dr. Ottenheimer has received the Kansas State University President's Award for Distinguished Service to Minority Education, and the Charles Irby Award for Distinguished Service to the National Association for Ethnic Studies. She has served as president of the National Association for Ethnic Studies and the Central States Anthropological Association. She speaks five languages: English, Spanish, French, Russian, and Shinswani. She is attempting to learn to speak and read Czech.

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