

Bassetti, B. (2012) Cook, Vivian. In C. A. Chapelle (Ed.) *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics* (pp. 1127-1131). Oxford, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.

Vivian James Cook (13 June 1940) is an English applied linguist who investigates second language acquisition, and especially multi-competence. He holds a Chair in Applied Linguistics at Newcastle University (UK).

An active researcher and theoriser and a popular writer, Professor Cook's past and present work covers first language acquisition, second language acquisition, second language teaching, linguistics, English as a Foreign Language, writing systems and bilingual cognition. He is currently chiefly noted for his work on second language acquisition, in particular his concept of multi-competence. He is a prolific author, who has published more than twenty single- or jointly-authored books and more than a hundred journal articles and book chapters. He is a writer of textbooks -- on linguistics, first and second language acquisition, language teaching, English as a Foreign Language and the English writing system -- and of popular books. He is an enthusiastic initiator, with a flair for pioneering new areas of research and for promoting communication across discipline boundaries. He founded (1989) and was first President of (1991) the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA), whose annual conference, held since 1991 in different countries, is arguably the most prestigious meeting for non-pedagogically-oriented second language researchers in Europe. In 1993 he was a member of the founding committee of MATSDA (Materials Development Association), a group of interested parties working for the development of high-quality language teaching materials. In 2009 he co-founded the journal *Writing Systems Research*. Over the past 20 years, he has helped the emergence of new research areas, from the effects of second languages on first languages, to second language writing systems, to bilingual cognition, by organising workshops and editing volumes, as well as through his own research. In the past decade, his work has focussed on developing the multi-competence approach to second language acquisition, on writing systems and on bilingual cognition.

Vivian Cook's first jobs were as a Lecturer in English as a Foreign Language at Ealing Technical College (now Thames Valley University) and as Director of the Language Service at the North East London Polytechnic (now University of East London). During this period, he authored or co-authored several coursebooks of English as a Foreign Language, including the tape-based *Active intonation* (1968), the audiolingual drill-and-dialogue based course *Realistic English* (with Brian Abbs and Mary Underwood, 1968-70), *English topics* (1975a), which was based on his concept of the topic syllabus, the communicative-based *Using intonation* (1979a), and *English for life* (3 volumes, 1980-1983), which was based upon the idea of patterned conversational interaction. His English coursebooks have been widely used all over the world.

Vivian Cook has been researching language acquisition since the early days of his career. In the 60s and 70s his publications dealt with both first and second language acquisition and the relationship between the two. In 1978 he became a lecturer in applied linguistics at the University of Essex, where he taught first and second language acquisition and language teaching methodology. His interests then shifted more towards second language acquisition and second language teaching.

From the 1970s to the 1980s Vivian Cook was a pioneer in the use of second language acquisition research techniques such as elicited imitation (1973), short-term memory measures (1977), Micro Artificial Languages (1988b), and computerised response time measurement of comprehension (1990) and of grammaticality judgement tasks (1994). Believing that the key to language teaching was to understand how people learn languages, he embarked on a life-long enterprise of bringing together linguistics and second language research with language teaching. He played a major role in popularising Chomsky's theories, and explored various ways in which Universal Grammar could be useful for SLA research and language teaching.

He continued to publish on language teaching, from materials development to syllabus design. In the 1980s he was active in developing CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) programs for English teaching using BASIC and PROLOG. He argued that the main asset of the computer was its unique ability to handle language through parsing and interactive dialogues, and he therefore concentrated on syntactic parsing programs, computer adventure games and mock interviews, which he presented in several publications.

Since 1991, Vivian Cook has been developing an approach to second language acquisition known as multi-competence. *Multi-competence* (hyphenated in his writings) is 'the knowledge of two languages in one mind' (see Multi-competence). The main tenet is that the mind of someone who knows more than one language is different from the mind of a monolingual. Anyone who uses one or more languages in addition to the one they first learnt as children is then an *L2 user* (pronounced 'L two user' to avoid the negative connotations of the word 'second'), a label used to differentiate those who have knowledge of more than one language from those in the process of learning another language (*L2 learners*). Second language users are not only quantitatively different from monolinguals (in the number of languages known, or in the level of knowledge of their languages), they are also qualitatively different, because knowledge of more than one language affects all the linguistic systems in the L2 user's mind (see Cook, 2002). Knowing a second language affects the first; this is not a symptom of attrition, but of a restructuring language system (see Cook, 2003). Effects can be found in all language modalities (i.e., in reading and spelling, rather than only in speaking), and even in non-linguistic cognition. Given these qualitative differences, L2 learners and users should not be compared with native speakers, but rather with successful L2 users. Most importantly, since multi-competence is a potential achievement for all human beings, researchers in all fields should bear in mind that monolinguals are not representative of what human beings can achieve. The idea of multi-competence has been applied to various fields, from the bimodal bilingualism of the Deaf to Native American Languages.

A leitmotiv of Vivian Cook's work has been his constant interest in language teaching. He has always aimed at relating language teaching practice to second language research findings, and has written various articles about the implications of Universal Grammar for language teaching and for multi-competence. Within the multi-competence approach, learners can use their first language in the L2 classroom, L2 teachers need not be native speakers of the language they are teaching, and the purpose of L2 learning is to become a multi-competent user of more than one

language rather than an imitation of a native speaker of a second language. Based on his work on the English writing system, Vivian Cook argued that second language teachers and textbooks should pay more attention to teaching written language in its own right, rather than using it as a representation of spoken language. Based on his work on bilingual cognition, he argued that second language teaching and learning can change the way people think.

In the early years of the new millennium, Vivian Cook began researching writing systems. In 2004 he published *The English writing system*, which introduced English orthography to students, covering the linguistics of English orthography and its acquisition by children and second language learners. In the same year he organised the first workshop on second language writing systems (with Benedetta Bassetti), and in the following year edited *Second language writing systems* (with B. Bassetti). This was the first volume to deal with the acquisition and use of a writing system in a second language. In 2009 he founded the journal *Writing Systems Research* with Jyotsna Vaid and B. Bassetti, with the aim of publishing interdisciplinary and international research on all aspects of writing systems.

Professor Cook has always been interested in the connections between second languages and the psychological processes of language. He has favoured an experimental approach to second language research (e.g., *Experimental approaches to second language learning*, 1986), and conducted experiments on the comprehension of relative clauses (1975b), on aspects of short term memory (1977), and on the psychological reality of adjacency pairs (1981); in 1997 he published a widely-quoted survey paper on 'The consequences of bilingualism for cognitive processing'. In recent years he has been looking at the relationship between linguistic relativity and bilingual cognition. Since linguistic relativity research shows differences in non-linguistic cognition among speakers of different languages, knowledge of more than one language might affect non-linguistic cognition. In 2002 he organised a panel on the topic of 'Bilingual cognition' at the 12th EUROSLA conference, where he and his students presented research investigating the relationship between linguistic relativity and non-linguistic cognition in bilinguals. In 2011 he edited the volume *Language and bilingual cognition* (with B. Bassetti), which brought together more than 30 scholars working in different disciplines and countries to showcase research on bilingual cognition, its theoretical background and its practical implications.

The volumes edited in the past two decades show Vivian Cook's continuous interest in bringing together researchers working on language across different disciplines and fields, such as linguistics, psychology and education inter alia.

An important aspect of Professor's Cook production, and indicative of his personality, is his role in popularising linguistics and second language research by authoring textbooks for postgraduate students and popular books. His accessible and entertaining style, characterised by a spoken-language quality and by unusual and memorable examples, coupled with his encyclopedic knowledge, make his textbooks and popular books very successful.

His introduction to Chomsky's syntactic theories, *Chomsky's Universal Grammar: An introduction* (1988a) proved popular with students of linguistics. It is now in its third edition (co-authored with M. Newson, 2007), and it has been translated into Chinese,

Italian, Japanese and Korean. His book *Young children and language* (1979b) aimed to inform playgroup workers about children's acquisition of language in non-academic language. Other successful textbooks introduced students to the acquisition, learning and teaching of a second language. *Second language learning and language teaching* (1991) now in its fourth edition (2008) and translated into Chinese and Japanese, becomes more multi-competence oriented with each new edition. *Linguistics and second language acquisition* (1993) covered a breadth of areas of linguistics (rather than simply syntax), and is still used as a textbook in postgraduate courses in applied linguistics and language teaching.

Professor Cook has also authored two popular books that aim at introducing serious linguistics to the general public while entertaining them. *Accommodating broccoli in the cemetery: Or, why can't anybody spell?* (2004a) managed to convey linguistically sound views of the English orthography to the general public. The book was very well-received, and an American edition was published the following year. In *It's all in a word: History, meaning and the sheer joy of words* (2009), Professor Cook presented the lay reader with amusing but linguistically informative facts and arguments about the nature of vocabulary and its acquisition and use.

Professor Cook has given talks all over the world, from the Far East (China, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Singapore) to the Middle East (Gaza, Iran, Israel) to the American continent (Argentina, Canada, Chile, the US), as well as most, if not all, European countries. He is a devoted teacher and supervisor, and his former students can be found in universities around the world. Regular updates about his publications and teaching can be found on his website <http://homepage.ntlworld.com/vivian.c/Vivian%20Cook.htm>, which also provides an extensive bibliography of second language acquisition research.

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