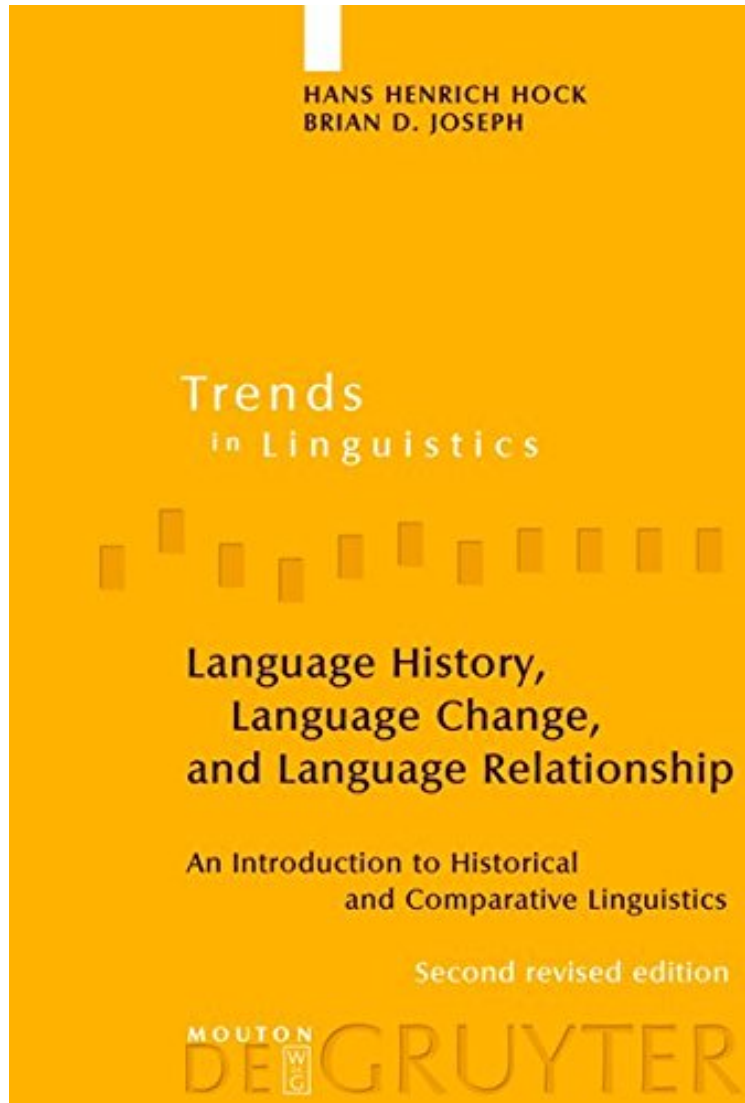


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Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship (Mouton Textbook)

Hans Henrich Hock

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Hans Henrich Hock : Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship (Mouton Textbook) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Language History, Language Change, and Language Relationship (Mouton Textbook):

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Not really a textbook, but definitely introductory By MAubreyI was left somewhat confused by what I saw in the two star review for this volume. Granted, we both agree that its an

excellent book, but I was surprised by his title stating that the book, "Starts off at a simple level, but too abruptly increases in its demands." Not really. Perhaps the kind of information becomes more complex, but I'd say that has more to do with the fact that morphological change and syntactic change in historical linguistics are far more complex topics than the first few chapters. And then when you move into meaning and semantics you jump again. But that's an issue with the field, not with this book. Throughout the volume, Hock and Joseph's writing is clear, helpful and extremely accessible. The book is a surprisingly easy read and an absolute pleasure. I read roughly 100 pages of it over the course of two days just because it was so engrossing. If you have a couple of years of linguistics (or even a couple years of classics studies) under your belt, you won't have a problem with this volume. It's an incredibly handy book that covers an immense amount of material in a very accessible manner. The reason, I'd say it's not really a textbook is that it lacks any sort of exercises where a student to practice or develop skills for doing historical linguistics. The book functions better in providing information about the state of historical linguistics and the kinds of research that is done in the field. Like the other review, I would probably give the book four stars. However, I have given it five here in order to balance it out with the unfortunate two star review, which this volume definitely does not deserve.

0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. very dull, but the class was easy so I'm giving ...By Customer It's an alright textbook, very dull, but the class was easy so I'm giving it 3 stars :) 23 of 23 people found the following review helpful. Starts off at a simple level, but too abruptly increases in its demands By Christopher Culver LANGUAGE HISTORY, LANGUAGE CHANGE, AND LANGUAGE RELATIONSHIP is an introductory textbook to historical/comparative linguistics by Hans Heinrich Hock and Brian D. Joseph. It began as a simplification of Hock's widely respected handbook *Principles of Historical Linguistics* (De Gruyter, 2nd ed. 1991). Around 85% percent of the content is Hock's distillation of previously written material, while the remaining 15% was contributed by Joseph's to, in the publisher's words, "give a fully American perspective". Joseph's contributions are most readily visible in the treatment of the Balkan Sprachbund, one of his research interests. For about the first 130 pages, this textbook is a fairly admirable introduction to historical linguistics for neophytes, containing remarks on the general phenomenon of language change (i.e. the difference between the Lord's Prayer in Old English and in Modern English), a basic introduction to phonetics and phonology, and an explanation of the divergence of the Indo-European languages. There's even a chapter on writing systems here, which the other introductory textbooks I'm familiar with tend to overlook. Hock's examples are generally drawn from the Indo-European languages, and he seems to assume that the reader will be focusing on this language family. The book may now seem a little dated in its treatment of the glottalic hypothesis as a raging controversy, as that seems to have died down, but the reconstruction of Proto-Indo-European generally follows contemporary mainstream lines. However, the textbook then makes a great jump in what it expects from the reader, going from an appropriately simple tone to one very little different from *PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS*. Mouton de Gruyter's typesetting doesn't help, as it follows a style appropriate for a handbook but rather intimidating for a textbook. For those looking to read up on basic historical linguistics, I'd much rather recommend Lyle Campbell's *Historical Linguistics, 2nd Edition: An Introduction* (MIT Press, 2nd ed. 2004), which is written at a very genial tone throughout. And after that, one should be well-equipped to go straight on to *PRINCIPLES OF HISTORICAL LINGUISTICS*, skipping this odd mishmash.

Why does language change? Why can we speak to and understand our parents but have trouble reading Shakespeare? Why is Chaucer's English of the fourteenth century so different from Modern English of the late twentieth century that the two are essentially different languages? Why are Americans and English 'one people divided by a common language'? And how can the language of Chaucer and Modern English - or Modern British and American English - still be called the same language? The present book provides answers to questions like these in a straightforward way, aimed at the non-specialist, with ample illustrations from both familiar and more exotic languages. Most chapters in this new edition have been reworked, with some difficult passages removed, other passages thoroughly rewritten, and several new sections added, e.g. on language and race and on Indian writing systems. Further, the chapter notes and bibliography have all been updated.

About the Author Hans Heinrich Hock, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA; Brian D. Joseph, Ohio State University, USA.