



**Language and Literacy (RLE Linguistics C:
Applied Linguistics): The Sociolinguistics of
Reading and Writing (Routledge Library Editions:
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Michael Stubbs

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Despite a vast amount of study, literacy is still a very confused topic, which requires the integration of findings from different areas. Reading and writing are psychological skills, but they are also linguistic skills (since people read and write meaningful language) and social skills (since written language serves particular functions in different societies). In this book Michael Stubbs provides a basis for a sociolinguistic theory of literacy. He believes that a systematic theory of literacy must be based on an understanding of a number of factors, such as the relationship between written and spoken language, including how English spelling works and how it is related to spoken English. Also of paramount importance are the social, educational and technological pressures on written language, which are particularly powerful in the case of an international language like English; the social and communicative functions which written language serves – largely administrative and intellectual functions; and the variability of spoken language and the relative uniformity of written language.

The book also discusses the arguments behind deprivation theory as an explanation of educational failure. Reading failure is not well understood, but the author stresses that a vital element is the attitude of teachers towards the child's language. He emphasizes that it is important that teachers should understand as much as possible about the relationship between written language and the child's spoken language. Such understanding, he argues, can only increase tolerance of regional, social and ethnic diversity in language.

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