

Reviews

***Exploring Japanese University English Teachers' Professional Identity.* Diane Hawley Nagatomo. Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2012. xii + 315 pp.**

Reviewed by

Crystal Green

University of Jyväskylä, Finland

Exploring Japanese University English Teachers' Professional Identity offers a fascinating picture of the current state of English teaching at the university level in Japan. An audience familiar with Japan will find that the book is consonant with mainstream perceptions, while throwing into sharp relief the experiences of native Japanese teachers of English in a data-driven exploration of experience and identity. Nagatomo has added significantly to the conversations on gender and professional identity in broad strokes with qualitative inquiry into an under-researched area as well as in more specific particulars through the intimate narratives of university English teachers. The book is a valuable addition to the libraries of university teachers, as well as of those interested in studies of gender, professional identity, English teaching, narrative research, and the teaching context in Japan.

The book is divided into eight chapters: Chapters 1-4 provide the background for the study; Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are case studies considering professional identity (Chapter 5: "Developing Professional Identity"), gender (Chapter 6: "It's a Man's World"), and teacher practices and beliefs (Chapter 7: "Teaching is What I Do Not Who I Am"); Chapter 8 presents a summary of the findings with remarks.

Nagatomo crafts a compelling introduction to the book, signaling the influential place of English teachers in Japanese university education. She then indicates the possible disconnect between the Ministry of Education's goals and the practices and beliefs of teachers themselves as the starting point for

her research, aiming to bring teachers' practices and beliefs more centrally into the discourse on English education in Japan. Although acknowledging the TESEP (tertiary, secondary, and primary) vs. BANA (Britain, Australasia, and North America) tensions in English teaching, Nagatomo steers clear of the cultural pedagogy debate and focuses on the development of English teachers' professional identity as key to understanding and improving English teaching. In pursuing her research, she expertly refrains from negative discourse about pedagogical styles in Japanese English classrooms to delve into more compelling questions of who teachers themselves are and how teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and identity influence language teaching.

In the opening four chapters, the research is contextualized with a concise but thorough background about university education, English teaching, and gender in Japan. Nagatomo uses *narrative study*, collecting stories from eight teachers through in-depth interviews over a period of 1 year to create three unique, interconnecting studies. Previous studies of professional identity in Japan have included both native and nonnative English teachers (e.g., Simon-Maeda, 2004; Stewart, 2005), but Nagatomo's work is distinguished by being based solely on in-depth interviews with native Japanese English teachers. Chapter 5 considers the development of four relatively new English teachers' professional identities. Nagatomo adopts Wenger's (1998) theory of identity and communities of practice as her framework to explore the teachers' engagement in teaching and the workplace, access to inbound trajectories, and engagement in wider society. In Chapter 6, "It's a Man's World," Nagatomo uses Gee's (2000) perspective on identity as a structured way to explore the narratives of seven female teachers, systematically revealing the ways these women's gendered identities are intertwined with other identities as individuals and professionals. Chapter 7, "Teaching is What I Do Not Who I Am," considers how one female teacher's practices influence her professional identity. Using class observations and interviews, Nagatomo makes an insightful investigation of the intersection of practice and beliefs. She touches briefly on the debate about language pedagogy before examining the more interesting matter of why her participant chooses to lecture her English classes in Japanese. Drawing these three chapters together, Nagatomo summarizes her findings in four categories: English language teacher versus academic in an English-related field, past student self versus teacher self, woman in a male-dominated society, and the influence of learning histories on teaching styles. Nagatomo ends the book with a call to action in the form of recommendations for improving English education at the university level. These recommendations are centered on teacher experience: the need for more pedagogical training for

university teachers and an apprenticeship or mentoring system.

Nagatomo illustrates her points in a clear, succinct, and conversational tone, creating a book that is both persuasive and easy to read. She is also accurate in her observation that “the greatest value in [the] study lies in exposing the clear and frank self-reflection of the participants provided during the interviews” (p. 189). Although her findings will not come as unexpected to those familiar with the Japanese context, they are distinctive in the care with which she has applied the theoretical frameworks to derive her conclusions.

A small criticism would be that the teachers’ words quoted to illustrate her findings could have been more explicitly interpreted. Nagatomo conducted the interviews in English and later revised the interview transcriptions to be more intelligible. Even so, it is not always easy to understand the meaning the teachers were trying to convey. For this reason, the quoted words presented to the reader as emblematic and the conclusions drawn from them may seem somewhat unclear. It also seems that Nagatomo presumes her readers have some familiarity with Japanese culture. Nevertheless, she is clear at every point about her own position in the study and her potential bias, and is cautious not to overstep her data.

In *Exploring Japanese University English Teachers’ Professional Identity*, Nagatomo, herself a woman who has lived many years in Japan as a university English teacher, displays an extensive understanding of the context and succeeds in transforming her dissertation into a book that addresses a gap in our understanding of issues in university English education in Japan.

References

- Gee, J. P. (2000). Identity as an analytic lens for research in education. In W. G. Secada (Ed.), *Review of research in education* (Vol. 25). Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Simon-Maeda, A. (2004). The complex construction of professional identities: Female EFL educators in Japan speak out. *TESOL Quarterly*, 38, 405-436.
- Stewart, A. (2005). *Teaching positions: A study of identity in English language teachers in Japanese higher education* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of London.
- Wenger, E. (1998). *Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

***Second Language Acquisition Myths: Applying Second Language Research to Classroom Teaching.* Steven Brown and Jenifer Larson-Hall. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2012. viii + 199 pp.**

Reviewed by

Harumi Kimura

Miyagi Gakuin Women's University

Second Language Acquisition Myths is written as an introductory book in SLA with insights from research that are intended to help both pre-service and in-service teachers apply the findings in their teaching. This book adopts the chapter structure of *Vocabulary Myths* (Folse, 2004), the first book in the myths series from the University of Michigan Press. Each chapter has three sections presented in the same sequence: "In the Real World" in which one of the authors shares a personal story to introduce the topic; "What the Research Says" covers the research findings; and "What We Can Do" links research to classroom practice.

The book consists of eight units, each of which tries to refute a common misunderstanding about how people learn languages. For example, Myth 1 states that children are good learners of languages but adults are not. However, both the anecdote Larson-Hall shares with readers and an array of past studies demonstrate that children are not faster than adults in learning either their first or second language and that both children and adults need to be exposed to the language and immersed in the language environment for an extended period to be perceived as relatively fluent. Furthermore, adults' brains are shown to be plastic (i.e., adults can learn new things and new languages). Myth 2 refers to the common naïve belief that bilinguals are people who speak two languages perfectly. Contrary to this common belief, there are many different types of bilinguals besides *balanced bilinguals*, who typically encounter two languages early in their lives and become fluent in both.

Brown and Larson-Hall reserve the largest part of the book (Myths 3-6) for the input-interaction-output theory of SLA and suggest that a lot of classroom practice should be reconsidered and modified. A large amount of input is essential, but meaningful interaction with ample opportunities for producing output and receiving effective feedback also plays a vital role. Practice is necessary, but just practicing does not advance learners to producing perfectly accurate output. Explicit teaching is effective to some

extent, if it has enough reinforcement (e.g., through planning and repetition), but still has limitations. Also, corrective feedback is not as effective as teachers expect if it is not consistent and persistent.

The authors suspect that individual differences might not be as powerful a driving force in SLA (Myth 7) as they have been believed to be. Past research in personality and learning styles has produced mixed results, and rather promising constructs such as motivation and aptitude have recently been going through major reconceptualization to better describe their reality. For example, motivation has been shown to be dynamic, not static, and situated in specific contexts. In addition, other individual attributes should be investigated, such as interests and emotions.

In Myth 8, the authors cite alternative perspectives in SLA. Pragmatic competence is an integral part of language knowledge—it can and should be taught. Researchers in sociocultural strands perceive that language learning proceeds in a social context and that language learning research should look beyond the individual. Thus, they see interaction differently from mainstream researchers and believe that learners co-construct knowledge through interaction. Along this line of thought, the authors also refer to language socialization and L2 learner identity.

The anecdotes and monologues at the beginning of each chapter invite readers into the topic. Readers can then relate those stories to their own experiences. For example, Larson-Hall, an English-speaking mother who was based in Japan, shared her experience in parenting a 7-year old Japanese-speaking girl whom she adopted. The girl needed lengthy exposure to the new English language and a push to start speaking it. Thanks to this personal story, the discussion that follows in Myth 2 is more approachable.

The authors have chosen a limited number of studies and have then gone into some depth to make their point. They decided on this approach for the benefit of their main targeted readers—novices in the field. In this attempt, the authors have been successful. For example, when they discuss the controversy over the effectiveness of written grammar corrections, they go into a rather thorough discussion but cite only a few articles instead of giving an exhaustive list of studies.

The authors cover both mainstream research and social approaches in the field without getting too deep into theoretical debates. As this is an introductory title, the balanced perspective that learning languages is both a cognitive and social matter is highly appropriate. At the same time, the authors seem to recognize the need for further exploration of the social dimensions of language learning. The three suggestions in Myth 8 to (a) promote developing

communicative competence, (b) make more use of group work, and (c) have students experience real use of the language through service learning indicate that they view interaction in terms of participation in interpersonal relationships.

There are additional characteristics of this book that should be noted. First, although the primary purpose is to give an overview of the field, the authors occasionally refer to their own views. For example, in relation to possible directions that future studies on individual differences could take, the authors suggest cultivating learners' metacognitive skills and beliefs. Second, the authors do mention key concepts in statistics and quantitative research findings when necessary and appropriate. They put explanations of such concepts as effect sizes and correlations in boxes separate from the main text itself. Third, the authors include tables and figures to summarize the key points in some articles. This provides visual support for readers to understand what each study demonstrated, such as the contrast between learning grammar and the development of unaccented speech according to bilinguals' age on arrival (pp. 13-14). Fourth, although the sources for discussion are mainly from SLA, the authors do refer to cognitive psychology and neuroscience at times, which demonstrates that they have taken a wider, multidisciplinary perspective on the study of SLA.

On a less positive note, although their suggestions in the "What We Can Do" sections are insightful and practical, occasionally they make a proposal that does not seem to fit the previous discussion. For example, in Myth 5, after saying that learners are not likely to learn what they are taught, the authors suggest teaching chunks of language. Although their suggestion is reasonable, readers might wonder what made the authors take this stance given the previous discussion on explicit teaching and feedback.

Overall, this is an ideal starter book on SLA and teacher trainers will welcome this title as a textbook for introductory TESOL courses. Undergraduate and graduate students will see it as an enjoyable, easy read to shape and challenge their own beliefs. Teachers who want to bring their knowledge of SLA up to date will enjoy considering the new developments presented. The authors hoped they would arouse readers' interests in particular areas of SLA, and I think they have done so quite capably.

Reference

- Folse, K. S. (2004). *Vocabulary myths: Applying second language research to classroom teaching*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.

Language Curriculum Design. I. S. Paul Nation and John Macalister. New York: Routledge, 2010. xvi + 224 pp.

Reviewed by

Leigh McDowell

Nara Institute of Science and Technology

A large number of books on curriculum design (CD) have already been written, with some serving as classics in the field for decades, so I was curious to know what this book by Nation and Macalister might contribute. From the outset in Chapter 1, the authors introduce what I came to recognize as the enduring contribution of this book: an elegant and all-encompassing model of the CD process. Represented as a diagram on p. 3, the model looks a bit like one of those mysterious crop circles, with three separate circles emerging from one central circle, each divided into three subcomponents, and all contained within one larger circle. This visual model provides a clear representation of a very complex process—and the authors are consistent throughout the book that CD should be viewed as a process that can look at any of the specific elements “with a variety of starting points and with continual opportunity to return to [the various] parts” (p. 197).

According to the model, goals are at the very center of the process and are directly linked with three areas: (a) content and sequencing, (b) format and presentation, and (c) monitoring and assessment. Together, these form the central circle of the model, out of which come three separate circles representing environment analysis, needs analysis, and principles. There’s one more circle, representing evaluation, surrounding the model. Chapters 2-8 are dedicated to these seven individual parts of the model. Like a good lesson, each chapter starts with its aims, ends with a summary of the steps covered, offers tasks to allow the reader to apply the steps introduced, and provides case studies to further highlight the core concepts.

Chapter 2 focuses on *environment analysis*, which is the process of investigating the constraints that may affect the goals of a course (e.g., students’ contact time with the language, teachers’ background knowledge, or the layout of the classroom [my examples, not the authors’]). This is an appropriate starting point for the book as even the most sophisticated CD will not succeed if the basic environmental constraints have not been addressed. *Needs analysis*, traditionally a central focus of CD, is treated in Chapter 3 as one of the three outer circles of the CD model (along with environment analysis and

principles). Needs analysis is further divided into three parts—necessities, wants, and lacks—and the authors look at some tools for investigating these. I felt that, on its own, the description offered in this chapter equips the reader to perform only a small-scale needs analysis, and that there was little coverage of the types or depth of data analysis used in more extensive needs analyses. However, according to the model, a needs analysis is only one of seven parts of the CD process. Also, having a separate chapter for environment analysis means that needs can be uncovered from different angles. In practical terms, the sophistication provided will suffice for many curriculum designers.

Following environmental and needs analyses, the third circle that feeds into goals and the central part of the CD model is *principles*, taken up in Chapter 4. It is now well accepted that principles, rather than methods of language teaching, should be followed and this chapter offers a collection of 20 principles for sound language pedagogy. Each principle is given a snappy name to help digest and remember them, (e.g., Time on task) along with a concise discussion and references to the published research and theory that support them. This list is an excellent resource for language teachers and one could base an entire CD on just this chapter and still come away with a decent course.

Chapter 5 moves to the central circle of the CD model and covers *content and sequencing* as well as reviewing goals, which makes sense as the content of a course or its lessons is inextricably tied to its objectives and outcomes. The authors offer clear guidelines and starting points for determining content, such as vocabulary, grammar, language use, and discourse. For sequencing, the authors cover a range of possible units of progression, such as words, genres, topics, strategies, subskills, and task outcomes and provide comprehensive lists that inform sequencing considerations. I felt the range of choice in this chapter reflects how far the field has progressed since the days of repackaging grammar items as functions in the scope and sequence charts blended into the table of contents in course books. The lists of potential units of progression in this chapter are yet another valuable resource for practicing teachers.

The next two chapters complete the central circle of the model. Under the heading *format and presentation*, Chapter 6 covers teaching and learning techniques (i.e., the kinds of activities we do in the classroom) and offers guidelines for deciding lesson format. In keeping with the cohesive nature of the volume, these guidelines build solidly on the topics already covered. Those familiar with Nation's (2007) work will recognize the four strands—another all-encompassing model. Chapter 7 covers the basics of *monitoring*

and assessment, including reliability, validity, and practicality, with another set of robust guidelines to relate this piece to the rest of the CD puzzle.

Finally, *evaluation*—that is evaluation of the curriculum, not the learners—completes the model. Chapter 8 offers steps on how to gather data and the types of data that can be gathered to aid in evaluating curricula. The authors then go on to offer six more useful chapters that cover the following topics: “Approaches to Curriculum Design,” “Negotiated Syllabuses,” “Adopting and Adapting an Existing Course Book,” “Introducing Change,” “Planning an In-service Course,” with “Teaching and Curriculum Design” serving as a grand review of the whole book.

As language teachers, we are faced with decisions relating to CD on a daily basis, and thus we can all benefit from gaining a wider understanding of the topics presented in this book. In addition, as the authors point out, curriculum related decisions need not be a large-scale operation—language curriculum design can be “applied to something as small as an activity in a lesson” (p. 197). This book offers a broad understanding of the process in a clear and comprehensive, yet concise package that—along with the model itself—can confidently guide users at the classroom and program level through the complex activity of language CD.

Reference

Nation, I. S. P. (2007). The four strands. *Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1*, 1-12.

***Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Contexts.*
Ali Shehadeh and Christine A. Coombe (Eds.). Amsterdam/
Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2012. xi + 363 pp.**

Reviewed by

Jason Moser

Osaka Shoin Women's University

Over the past decade there has been a noticeable increase in the number of books and research articles on the subject of task-based learning and teaching (TBLT). TBLT is now clearly a mainstream concept in ESL/EFL. *Task-Based Language Teaching in Foreign Language Contexts* is the newest contribution to this expanding literature. The editors' stated purpose with this collection of research articles is to expand TBLT literature by including the underrepresented EFL context. Shehadeh writes in Chapter 1 that the research in the book highlights the fact that the conditions under which TBLT is researched, implemented, and practiced in foreign language settings are often very different from those of second language settings. He goes on to describe some of the institutional, student, and teacher factors that shape TBLT in EFL contexts.

The next 13 chapters in the book consist of research studies. Six of these studies are situated in Japan, which Carless in the last chapter believes might reflect the robustness of TBLT research in Japan rather than any editorial bias. The book is divided into two sections. The first section, "Variables Affecting Task-Based Language Learning and Performance," includes five research studies that build on prior TBLT research. Chapter 2, by Sasayama and Izumi, like most of the studies in the book, includes the underrepresented population in TBLT research of students with limited oral proficiency. Their study investigated the effects of task complexity and pretask planning. It found support for both Robinson's (2001) cognition hypothesis and Skehan's (1998) limited capacity hypothesis. Chapter 3, by Malicka and Levkina, is a study situated in a Spanish university and is rare in that the authors investigated the influence of proficiency on task difficulty perception and task performance outcomes. Surprisingly few TBLT studies to date have researched the important variable of proficiency in relation to task performance. Chapter 4, by Genc, is a study with Turkish EFL students that, following Ellis and Yuan (2005), investigated the under-researched effect of modality (oral versus written) on task planning and task performance. Chapter 5, by Horiba and Fukaya, covers an investigation

into the effects of task conditions on text processing. In the study, a sample of students with limited L2 proficiency, initially given a text to process, were subsequently given a recall task on the same text to be completed under L1-only or L2-only conditions, or while switching from L1 to L2 during the recall. Students were then given an unannounced vocabulary test. Only the L1-only condition showed a significant result on the dimension of enhanced content recall of the prior text. In a final review of the inconclusive results, the authors suggest that task conditions may influence how well students process texts. They also suggest that for limited L2 proficiency students there is a trade-off between content learning and language learning. The final chapter of the first section, by Hobbs, is a Japan-based research study with important classroom implications. The study presents strong evidence of what researchers and teachers can learn about task structure and interaction by analyzing native-speaker task performances.

The second section of the book, "Implementation of Task-Based Language Teaching," focuses on studies that mostly center on the implementation of TBLT in classroom settings. Chapter 7, by Iwashita and Li, reports on patterns of corrective feedback in a TBLT class in a Chinese university. The study identifies conditions that allow for TBLT to be successfully implemented in similar EFL contexts. Chapter 8, by Moore, is a study based in Japan that will be of value to researchers interested in learner-generated focus on form. His study highlights a number of the contextual issues in the implementation of focus on form in EFL contexts including the influence of the L1. Chapter 9, by Chan, is a qualitative study of how novice teachers realize task-based language teaching in primary classrooms in Hong Kong. The study describes very thoroughly the multiple real-time decisions that teachers have to make during a task-based lesson in order for it to be successful. Chan writes that this decision-making ability is the key to successful task-based language teaching and learning. Chapter 10, by Park, is a computer-assisted task-based study in Korea with middle school students (ages 13-14), an under-represented group in TBLT research. In comparison to students taught using traditional teaching methods, the task-based group in his study in addition to doing better on task-based writing tests also showed better results on a standard grammar and vocabulary test. The study is valuable in that it demonstrates that TBLT is compatible with contexts that prioritize exam passing.

Chapter 11, by Chacón, is an action research study rich in detail situated in Venezuela that investigated ways for prospective language teachers to improve their oral fluency through a task-based approach that centers on

the use of films. In addition to the fluency gains for learners, Chacón concludes that the task-based project helped these teachers develop awareness of TBLT, which is now being introduced as part of the language-education reforms in Venezuela. Chapter 12, by Jackson, is a study that looks at the benefits of a task-based language teacher education program. The results are similar to those in the previous chapter in that they demonstrate that such programs help develop positive attitudes to TBLT including the value of collaborative work between teachers. Chapter 13, by Weaver, provides a very detailed step-by-step account of how a formative assessment cycle can be incorporated into a TBLT curriculum. As Weaver explains, this assessment cycle allows students to better understand the gaps in their interlanguage as well as supporting teachers to develop a more effective curriculum. The final research study by McAllister, Narcy-Combes, and Starkey-Perret, situated in a French university, examined the teachers' perceptions of the introduction of a new TBLT blended program in the university. The paper begins with an interesting explanation for the rationale of moving towards a TBLT curriculum. The findings of the teacher interviews showed a positive attitude toward the program but they also revealed a number of concerns.

The final chapter in the book is by David Carless, who was the keynote speaker at JALT's Task-Based Learning SIG's TBLT conference in 2012. He identifies some of the key themes that have emerged from the articles in addition to offering suggestions that can further the development of TBLT in EFL settings. This book demonstrates that TBLT research continues to expand and develop in new and important directions and provides original articles that make a significant contribution to TBLT research. As such, this edited volume will be of interest to researchers as well as program directors and classroom educators looking to incorporate TBLT.

References

- Ellis, R., & Yuan, F. (2005). The effects of careful within-task planning on oral and written task performance. In R. Ellis (Ed.), *Planning and task performance in a second language* (pp. 167-192). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Robinson, P. (2001). Task complexity, task difficulty, and task production: Exploring interactions in a componential framework. *Applied Linguistics*, 22, 27-57.
- Skehan, P. (1998). *A cognitive approach to language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Identity, Motivation, and Autonomy in Language Learning.
Garold Murray, Xuesong Gao, and Terry Lamb (Eds.). Bristol,
UK: Multilingual Matters, 2011. x + 266 pp.

Reviewed by

Richard J. Sampson

Gunma University

There has been a recent trend in second language acquisition theorizing and research towards looking at language and language learning holistically rather than attempting to divide these activities into subcomponents (Five Graces Group, 2009). *Identity, Motivation, and Autonomy in Language Learning*, an edited collection of 16 chapters divided into three sections, continues in this holistic vein with an “aim to synergise findings” (p. 1) from these three different areas. As the title of the volume suggests, this book is targeted at those interested in exploring the interrelated natures of identity, motivation, and autonomy. However, as a large portion of the content draws on institutional language learning contexts, it would perhaps be of greater benefit to teachers or those researching classroom language learning, particularly with qualitative methods.

The first section, containing four chapters, introduces emerging theoretical understandings that might inform the study of motivation, identity, and autonomy. It is perhaps apt that two of the chapters explicitly build upon a background of complexity theory, as there is an overall theme running throughout the section of the dynamic interaction of the learner with the environment. This theme is evident in the chapter by Ushioda, who contends that understandings in motivation research, which previously have been heavily based upon positivist world views, could be further developed by drawing on autonomy research and engaging with language learners as real people in real contexts with real identities. Ushioda further writes of an identity perspective on motivation that draws attention to the dynamic interaction between present negotiation of experience inside and outside of the classroom and future conceptions of possibility. The ways in which seemingly different approaches complement one another are again highlighted in the chapter by Gao and Zhang, in which they argue for the benefits of understanding interrelations between the sociocultural concept of *agency* and the cognitive theory notion of *metacognition* in considering language learner autonomy. The explicit discussion of complexity-based understandings begins with Sade’s chapter. This thought-provoking chapter provides a development of the idea of *identity*

fractalization. Sade contends that through analysis of narratives written by learners about their second language development one can discern two properties of fractals in identity formation—infinite possibilities for new social identities and self-similar patterns. The final chapter in section one, by Paiva, again draws on a complex adaptive systems perspective, arguing that identity, motivation, and autonomy are key elements that put a system into motion, fostering interaction between the individual and the environment. Paiva uses English language learner histories of Japanese and Brazilian learners to show how these key elements contribute to points of change and emergence in second language learning.

The second section again has four chapters, this time exploring independent learning contexts as offering valuable potential to examine interrelations between elements in the book's title empirically. From these chapters, the idea of personalization as a pedagogical resource emerges as the binding theme. Murray's chapter looks at how Japanese university-aged language learners used imagination in a blended self-access center (SAC) and classroom learning environment. His analysis reveals the ways in which learners used images of an ideal L2 self and imagined communities to assist their learning, leading him to propose that the learning process ought to be made a much more personalized experience drawing on an individual's imagination. Castillo Zaragoza's chapter adds a much-needed consideration of learners accessing SACs to study more than one language. Through her research with learners in Mexico, Castillo Zaragoza argues that through personally selected resources, SACs allow students to develop their own identities regarding plurilingualism. Murphy then deals with learner motivation in distance language learning. She contends that in order for learning to engage with multiple identities, roles, and interests of learners in such contexts, teachers ought to select course materials and activities, enhance opportunities for choice, and foster self-evaluation practices to personalize learning and reduce occasions when learners ponder, "Why am I doing this?" (p. 123). Finally, the chapter by Reinders and Lazaro takes a slightly different viewpoint, asking very astutely, "But what about the teacher?" (p. 125). It looks at teachers as facilitators of SACs, finding that the rewards teachers feel in acting on their beliefs that SACs might promote more flexible and personalized learning are balanced by an array of challenges, such as insufficient professional preparation, that have an impact on teachers' motivation and identity as teachers.

This clash of beliefs with realities is echoed in many of the six chapters in the final section, which deals with language learners' experiences in a

variety of contexts as well as teachers' perspectives. Chapters by Chik and Breidbach, and Martin Lamb provide situated accounts of the ways in which students had different expectations of and attributed different motivational, identity, and autonomy-related roles to classroom learning and classroom-external learning opportunities. This divergence of beliefs is also represented in the chapter by Ryan and Mercer, in which they argue that learner beliefs about the role of study abroad versus classroom learning in their home country may influence learners' sense of agency. They contend that teachers must take care that messages they send learners emphasize the individual learner as the agent of successful language learning rather than primarily the context, so that students do not expect learning to come effortlessly from the experience of study abroad. For language teachers, the chapter by Cowie and Sakui is intriguing in that it explores research asking teachers who work in the Japanese university context for their understandings and beliefs about the motivation of students. One area of interest that came from the chapter, although unfortunately not discussed explicitly, was how teachers placed themselves as the focal point of motivational practice in the classroom, rather than seeing motivation as emergent from interactions in the classroom. Exploration of this teacher belief, whether held consciously or subconsciously, and particularly in light of Ushioda's (2009) push for a "person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation" (p. 215), would be a particularly valuable follow-up to the study reported.

Although a common weakness of the chapters is a lack of detailed elaboration of analysis or methods, this is prevalent in most edited volumes containing a range of studies. On the other hand, one of the clear strengths of the book is its persistent use of individual voice—from students, and in an area that might be utilized further, from teachers—to investigate the lived experience of the interaction of identity, motivation, and autonomy. This use of individual voice makes the text more interesting and also allows readers to bring their own personal, lived understandings to interact through reading with the voices in the text. Furthermore, many of the chapters have clear implications for teachers: I found the chapter by Chik and Breidbach to be particularly inspiring, highlighting the ways in which the sharing of self-reflections on language learning processes between language learners with wikis might further promote learner motivation, autonomy, and identity by heightening awareness of the various paths that learners take. The book certainly takes an important step towards its stated aim of synergising findings regarding interactions between identity, motivation, and autonomy, and is recommended to anyone interested in the lived, holistic experiences of language learners and those involved with them.

References

- Five Graces Group. (2009). Language is a complex adaptive system: Position paper. *Language Learning*, 59(Supplement 1), 1-26.
- Ushioda, E. (2009). A person-in-context relational view of emergent motivation, self and identity. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, language identity and the L2 self* (pp. 215-228). Bristol, UK: Multilingual Matters.

***Beyond the Language Classroom*. Phil Benson and Hayo Reinders (Eds.). Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011. x + 208 pp.**

Reviewed by

Vick Ssali, Aichi Gakuin University
Umida Ashurova, Nanzan University

Although out-of-class learning is becoming more and more important, a large proportion of the studies and literature on language education so far has dwelt on in-class learning. *Beyond the Language Classroom* seeks to break this monopoly by looking at the existence, mechanisms, and significance of language teaching and learning in settings beyond the classroom. It is being acclaimed as the first published work to deal exclusively with language learning outside conventional classrooms, and in 13 chapters the book attempts to correct two false assumptions: one, on the extreme, that settings beyond classroom walls are good only for using the language, and the other that although some learning takes place as learners use the language in settings beyond classroom walls, there is no meaningful teaching possible.

From the beginning, the book brings the reader's attention to these false assumptions caused by the dichotomy between in-class and out-of-class learning or instructed and noninstructed kinds of learning. While making a reasonable argument that "language learning beyond the classroom lies in the distinctive modes of pedagogy that are found in different settings" (p. 2), Benson, in Chapter 1, introduces an analytical framework for investigating the field. He proposes that this framework consists of four dimensions (location, formality, pedagogy, and locus of control) and that it appears in

two main analytical constructs (setting and mode of practice). Calling this framework “somewhat rudimentary” (p. 15), Benson assumes that there will eventually be a theory of language learning beyond the classroom similar to that of instructed SLA as proposed by Ellis (1995).

The subsequent chapters are divided into three broad parts. Conveniently sequenced, Chapters 2 to 5 explore patterns of language learning beyond the classroom from four different, but related, theoretical perspectives. In Chapter 2, Palfreyman brings our attention to the role of social networks in learning beyond the classroom. He investigates how people in the learners’ families and social life (other than the teacher) contribute to the out-of-class language learning experiences of young Arab women. Palfreyman thus underlines the fact that such social networks are of paramount importance both as a means of language interaction and a source of encouragement and advice for the learner.

In Chapter 3, Kuure shifts the focus from people in our everyday lives to the things in our current technology-rich existence. Based on mediated discourse analysis, this case study of a young Finnish man’s technology-mediated out-of-school language learning practices shows that “computer games may provide important affordances for language learning” (p. 35). Kuure thus encourages language teachers to create activities for teenagers that “allow the participants’ own worlds to become shared resources in collaboration” (p. 46).

Chapter 4 reports on findings by Kalaja, Alanen, Palviainen, and Dufva that, providing the learner is prepared to exercise agency, there are many contexts and chances for learning outside the traditional school environment. Responses from Finnish learners of English and Swedish show that although the experiences of learning both languages were similar at school, outside the school learners engaged with the two languages in very different ways: they chose to seek out learning opportunities in English, but failed to expand the contexts for learning and using Swedish.

Although Chapter 5, by Menezes, begins with a rather lengthy and complicated theoretical background, the author’s main argument is relatively simple: “the dialogue between new metaphors and students’ voices will lead us to the understanding that perception and agency are crucial to language learning” (p. 60). Menezes’s examination of language-learning histories of Brazilian, Japanese, and Finnish students reveals that whichever opportunity is available beyond the classrooms is an essential element in the processes of language learning. In what will make interesting reading for advocates of independent learning beyond the language classroom, Menezes emphasizes

that schools alone cannot provide all the necessary opportunities for language development, so it is incumbent on teachers and facilitators to open their students' eyes to the world around them.

With these perspectives in mind, readers are prepared to take a look at Chapters 6-8, which examine more closely what learners actually get from language learning settings outside the traditional classroom. In what one can call an implicit reference to the power of agency, Divita describes in Chapter 6 how multilingual, code-switching seniors, influenced by their life pursuits, idiosyncratically learned and used their L2 in socio-linguistic circumstances different from formal settings. Zimmerman's paper (Chapter 7) will be of particular interest to teachers in schools with foreign students actively involved in learning the L1 of their host schools. Learners engaged in conversations about the language they were learning, which not only bridged linguistic and cultural gaps, but also provided real teaching and learning opportunities in completely autonomous circumstances beyond the walls of the classroom. The highlight of this section, though, is Sundqvist's examination in Chapter 8 of the extent to which the English that young people learned from activities they engaged in outside the language classroom contributed to their overall proficiency. Sundqvist's study also gives insight into the relevance of other variables such as the type of extramural activities, the time spent on them, and their interactivity.

Part 3 examines the issues arising from institutional initiatives to provide opportunities for language learning beyond the classroom. Bailly's paper (Chapter 9) will be of interest to EFL teachers who may be required to guide learners in choosing and learning another language besides the main one taught in the classroom. Bailly examines the relationship between in-school and out-of-school learning of foreign languages that are not taught at school, and her study gives insight into the languages students choose to study outside school, why they choose them, how they learn them outside of class, and the difficulties they meet.

In Chapter 10, Murray explores the topic of identifying optimally conducive circumstances for older learners in a self-access learning context. Not only does he bridge the gap in the existing research in which self-access learning is always identified with younger university learners, but he also eloquently describes the older learners' experiences from the dual perspectives of a "social learning space" and a "community of learners" (p. 144). Stickler and Emke present evidence in Chapter 11 that there is a lot of learning possible in online virtual environments. Although some readers may get lost in the definitions and emphasis on what the authors call informal,

nonformal, and incidental or unintentional learning, the study serves as an interesting methodological model for teachers doing research as participant observers. Instructors can reflect upon their own roles as tutors in matching students and guiding them through online meetings and activities to more learner-led interaction and learning. Finally, Barkhuizen (Chapter 12) focuses on “the relationships that language learners engage in with people beyond formal classroom contexts” (p. 161). This article will be of particular interest to readers involved in informal one-on-one tutoring situations. However, it also highlights the factors that influence any teacher-student relationship, more importantly teacher cognition and the learner’s real and imagined successes in L2 learning.

In Chapter 13, Reinders appropriately closes the book with ideas on the “selection, creation, and implementation of materials designed to support learners in their learning beyond the classroom, and to develop learner autonomy” (p. 175). Reinders places appropriate material development and use at the centre of the autonomous learning and assessment process, and teachers and facilitators in all the language learning settings outside the traditional classroom covered in the book will find a close reading of this practical chapter rewarding.

Beyond the Language Classroom stands out as a collection of 11 well-researched and easy-to-read accounts of language learning experiences outside the conventional classroom (Chapters 2-12), plus a very practical guide to effective material development and use for independent learning (Chapter 13). All the studies are grounded in a solid theoretical framework, and the book even begins (Chapter 1) with a succinct description of rudimentary conceptual guides to understanding learning settings beyond the classroom. This strength of the book may, however, also be the source of its weakness. Some chapters dwell too much on theoretical descriptions that sometimes overshadow the pedagogically practical experiences from the field. Despite this, the book succeeds in demonstrating that language learning and teaching is possible in settings beyond classroom walls, and it will be a useful resource for both novice researchers and veterans in the field of independent learning.

Reference

- Ellis, R. (1995). A theory of instructed second language acquisition. In N. C. Ellis (Ed.), *Implicit and explicit learning of languages* (pp. 79-114). London: Academic Press.