

## Reviews

***Interfaces Between Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing Research.*** Lyle F. Bachman and Andrew D. Cohen, Editors.  
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998. 202 pp.

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Second language acquisition (SLA) research has traditionally focused on learning while language testing (LT) has focused on measurement of learning. Strange as it may seem, the two areas have long remained fairly separate. This situation is changing. In 1992, the American Association for Applied Linguistics held the colloquium that led to the book, *Interfaces between Second Language Acquisition and Language Testing Research*. Original presenters and three additional researchers contributed. Although the inspiration was the colloquium, extensive recent material is included, making this book far more valuable than a simple collection of papers from a colloquium held some years ago.

The book, like the colloquium, is for SLA and LT researchers and does not introduce either testing or research methods. However, terms are defined and thinking is clearly explained through examples. The chapters are well organized, well written, and jargon-free, making them easy to read. The authors discuss issues basic to both LT and SLA, using concrete examples from several disciplines to demonstrate theoretical points. Thus, the book is both theoretical and concrete.

Because Bachman's article "Language testing – SLA interfaces" (1989) served as the starting point, the entire article is reprinted in the appendix. This article compares the aims and methods of LT and SLA research. It presents ways in which the two areas could and should combine their aims and methods to the benefit of both. Chapter 1, by Bachman and Cohen, extends the 1989 paper, with a more explicit description of the methods and goals of LT and SLA, along with numerous studies. The discussion points out how each study uses a combination of approaches to investigate problems and answer questions for which LT or SLA alone would be inadequate. This is followed by suggestions for future research.

Chapter 2, "Construct definition and validity enquiry in SLA research" by Carol A. Chapelle, is the longest and one of the most interesting in this very interesting group. The principles presented here form the backbone of the book. Chapelle discusses three views of the construct, or basic concept, underlying communicative competence and the implica-

tions of each concept for validation. The first is trait based. This is the archetypal language testing construct. In this view, communicative competence is a characteristic of individuals. Performance consistency is due to this stable characteristic. Measurement is validated by using several methods to measure a trait. Then the method effect is removed, leaving the trait component. The second is behavioral based. In this view, performance consistency is due to consistency in the circumstances surrounding a measurement rather than in the individual. Validation requires careful comparison of circumstances. The third view is interactionist and far more complex. Briefly, for interactionists, performance consistency is due to both of the above plus the metacognitive systems which control their interaction. This view is not simply additive, but requires a new framework. Validation is likewise complex, requiring several types of analysis. Chapelle uses vocabulary research to show the implications of each view of the construct, communicative competence. Later chapters build on the framework presented in this chapter.

Chapter 3, "Research on interlanguage variation: Implications for language testing," is by Elaine Tarone. Tarone first differentiates between individual differences (between people) and variation (within one person), focusing on oral production. She discusses research indicating that changes in the situation, or context of measurement, can affect the characteristics of oral production of an individual. These findings have serious implications for research and testing. For example, research is needed to determine the aspects of tasks that lead to systematic variation. Also, both researchers and test makers must specify task conditions in greater detail. She warns against making inferences unless task conditions are truly comparable and recommends developing a database of learners and contexts. This database would aid in the search for developmental sequences which could be specified in criterion-referenced scales.

Chapter 4 is "Strategies and processes in test taking and SLA" by Andrew D. Cohen. He reports on the use of a qualitative technique, verbal report, to validate tests. Test makers design tests to measure certain aspects of language. Test takers can be asked to describe how they determined their answers. This can reveal whether a test or test item measures what it intends to. When the reported strategies agree with the intentions, the test item is validated. However, if some respondents give wrong answers for right reasons or right answers for wrong reasons, there are problems that should be corrected. Studies using this type of analysis have shown, for example, that cloze tests predominantly measure local reading skill rather than global processing as was once claimed. Thus, in spite of its high reliability, the cloze test's claim to validity is undermined. Summaries, essay questions, and essays can also be analyzed through verbal reports.

Chapter 5, by Geoff Brindley, is titled "Describing language development: Rating scales and SLA." Brindley considers whether rating scale band descriptors describe the actual path of language acquisition. In other words, Brindley examines the validity of such scales from the viewpoint of SLA. Rating scales generally describe performance in a series of levels or bands. The descriptions may be detailed or general and may be intended for various purposes. The empirical basis of such scales is often not given and is rarely theoretical. Such scales need to be validated by multitrait-multimethod procedures to confirm the existence of the constructs implicit in the scales. In addition, it must be shown that the descriptors accurately depict learner behavior at each level. After an extended discussion of the problems with such scale band descriptors, Brindley suggests ways to validate them. As Brindley makes clear, this area is attracting increasing research attention.

Chapter 6, "Testing methods in context-based second language research" by Dan Douglas, is the shortest at fifteen pages. First, Douglas examines the various definitions and components of "context" that have been proposed, including internal and external context. He offers the term "discourse domain" to specify the learner's interpretation of the context. He argues that this is the most important aspect of testing and SLA research and concludes with a list of guidelines for research.

The final chapter, by Elana Shohamy, is titled "How can language testing and SLA benefit from each other? The case of discourse." Shohamy discusses three areas where LT can contribute to SLA, followed by three areas where SLA can contribute to LT. Language testing contributions regard the construct of language ability, ways to test SLA hypotheses, and criteria for measurement. Second language acquisition research contributions regard the language components to measure, tasks to use, and language variations. Shohamy uses discourse analysis to demonstrate each of her points. This chapter functions as an excellent summary of the book.

The index includes both cited authors and topics. There are some mistakes, such as mislisting all the citations for researchers named "Brown." The similarity of names may be blamed, but this kind of error reduces the usefulness of the index. Also, the style of citation is not uniform throughout the book.

What makes this book so important is that it forms a pivot. It brings together numerous strands from many areas of theory and research from the past in a way which has not been done on this scale before. It points the way to expanding and integrating research lines in the future. The contributors here are well known in either language testing or second language acquisition research. Here, the authors each move toward

the center. Leaders in SLA research address LT concerns, while LT leaders advocate SLA approaches. This is the first book to provide an overview of both this research and the theoretical concerns motivating it. This book presents a challenge to those involved in LT or SLA to work together to improve the practice of both areas.

***Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers.***

Anne Burns. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 259 pp.

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Action research is a topic of increasing interest among both educational researchers and practicing teachers. In its broadest conception, action research focuses on finding ways of solving problems and bringing about change through applied action. In the educational realm, action research is research that is teacher initiated, takes place in the classroom, and seeks to increase understanding of classroom teaching and learning and to bring about improvements in classroom practices. For an in-depth and practical examination of action research as applied to the language teaching setting, Burns' *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers* is a book worth considering.

Burns prefaces the book by stating that the notion of "teacher as researcher" has not yet been backed up by publications that focus specifically on classroom teachers working to conduct research. *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers* addresses this by providing a practical introduction into why action research should be of interest to classroom teachers, the fundamental steps in action research, and the means of analyzing action research data. Burns opens Chapter 1 with a summary of a case study describing how an experienced ESL teacher joined a collaborative action research group and developed a "critical perspective on her practice and observed systematically various influential factors operating in her classroom by using action research as a powerful medium of reflection" (pp. 11-12).

Burns emphasizes collaboration in action research, stating that portrayals of action research conducted on the basis of individual teachers investigating teaching and learning in the isolation of their own classrooms are counter to the original goals of action research, which were to bring about change in social situations as the result of group problem-solving and collaboration. She cites Kemmis and McTaggart (1988,

p. 5) who state that "the approach is only action research when it is *collaborative*, though it is important to realise that the action research of the group is achieved through the *critically examined action* of individual group members" [emphasis in original]. Burns asserts that collaboration not only encourages teachers to share common problems and work cooperatively as a research community, but also strengthens the opportunities for the results of the research to be fed back into educational systems in a substantial way. I would be remiss not to point out that others differ in their opinion regarding collaboration as an essential element of action research. Nunan (1992) states that collaboration "should not be seen as a defining characteristic of action research" (p. 18), while Wallace (1998), in his 250-page book *Action Research for Language Teachers*, chose to devote a 35-page section specifically to collaborative action research, in which he points out that while collaboration can do much to sustain motivation, save time, and generate richer input, the emergence of differing, sometimes incompatible positions, varying levels of commitment, and differing statuses can lead to confusion and conflict, and in the worst case, suspension of the project.

In Chapter 2 Burns provides a basic framework for examining action research within the broad range of research approaches, contrasting action research with both quantitative and qualitative research. In doing so she points out that action research fulfills basic research requirements (encompassing a researchable question/issue, generating data, and allowing for analysis) and accommodates both grounded theory and data triangulation. Burns states that the characteristic features of action research include its contextuality and localization; its evaluative and reflective nature; its participatory elements; and its orientation toward generating change. Burns describes the process of doing action research as "not so much a cycle, or even a sequence of cycles, but a series of interrelated experiences involving phases of exploring, identifying, planning, collecting data, analyzing/reflecting, hypothesizing/speculating, intervening, observing, reporting, writing, and presenting" (p. 35). Chapter 3 addresses the constraints and impediments of collaborative action research, the difficulty in finding a focus, and the myriad ethical considerations which come into play in undertaking action research.

Chapters 4 and 5 introduce observational and non-observational techniques for action research data collection. The former includes teachers' notes, diaries, and journals, audio and video recording, and photographing and charting. The section on charting describes the fundamentals of sociometry, a means of gaining detailed information about the social structures and interpersonal relationships of the members of a class. The non-observational techniques are described as introspective, in that

they invite personal and individual accounts of events, attitudes, and beliefs and include student interviews, surveys and questionnaires, student histories, and student documents, such as written work. Burns concludes Chapter 5 by discussing the development of "teacher metaphors," in which teachers apply introspective methods to themselves.

In Chapter 6 Burns introduces means both for evaluating research validity, a notion which is inherently problematic in action research, and for "enhancing trustworthiness in action research." An alternative to the standard quantitative measures of validity is described as through application of five validity criteria: democratic validity (inclusion of multiple voices); outcome validity (resolution of the problem); process validity (evaluation of the research process itself); catalytic validity (generating participant growth); and dialogic validity (the process of peer review). The trustworthiness of action research can be ensured by applying either triangulation, which involves gathering accounts of the teaching situation from three different views, for example, teacher, student, and observer, or using respondent checks, peer examination, consideration of rival explanations and negative cases, and monitoring for researcher bias.

In Chapter 7 Burns addresses sustaining the action, placing action research directly in the forefront of change in education and describing it as an effective means of enhancing professional development, teacher networks, research partnerships, and school renewal. Chapter 8 closes the book with four cases arguing the value of collaborative action research and Burns' concluding remarks.

My only criticism of the book is that it lacks a clear, step-by-step, "you do it" section, in which the "teacher as researcher" is, in a sense, taken by the hand and led through a single, highly transparent case, a compilation of everything introduced in the body of the book. I think that classroom teachers, always pressed for time, would appreciate a section organized on more of a "handbook" principle, a loose "fill-in-the-blanks" approach to one's first collaborative action research project.

That said, *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers* does cover the territory of action research and it does so in a manner comparable to its most likely competitor, Wallace's *Action Research for Language Teachers* (1998). Burns also provides abundant references for further study, organized as "classical" large-scale action research projects, works reflecting the recent development of a critical dimension to action research, practical guides to conducting action research in the second language field, and papers identifying specific focus areas or issues in action research. The section also includes information on relevant journals, an electronic mailing list, and an action research teacher network.

By the end of the book, the question of collaboration as being fundamental to action research has become somewhat of a non-issue. After Burns states her case at the beginning of the book, most of the content is relatively neutral on this point. In her concluding remarks, Burns again stresses the advantages of collaboration; however, these points convince me neither of the absolute necessity of collaboration in conducting action research itself, nor of the premise that action research is the preferable means to bring about system-level change. This does not detract from the book, however, as I see the collaboration element as a meaningful addition to a book which will serve the needs of anyone contemplating conducting action research, given the time to master it.

#### References

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***Essentials of English Language Testing***. S. Kathleen Kitao and Kenji Kitao. Tokyo: Eichosha, 1999. xii + 146 pp.

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Despite the title, this book serves as a primer on testing in any language. The book is written for classroom teachers and students studying to become teachers. In this respect, it succeeds. However, it will be difficult for most teachers unfamiliar with testing to use this short book to design and evaluate tests.

The book briefly covers many areas of testing, favoring breadth rather than depth in its discussion. The twenty small chapters, most of which are three to six pages long, introduce most of the common topics in classroom testing, such as validity, reliability, item and test design and evaluation, and the interpretation of test results.

Each chapter ends with either discussion or application exercises, which, with the exception of exercises in two of the chapters, do not require specific answers. Typical exercises ask the reader to examine and discuss certain aspects of tests they have taken or written and to discuss a skill-based or communicative test for a specific situation. These

exercises seem a little too general and demanding, considering the scope of the text. More support and feedback in the form of examples, detailed explanations, and exercises with answers are necessary for the exercises to be effective.

The discussions and vocabulary in the book are simple. The "Key Words" section at the beginning of each chapter contains vocabulary that all readers will understand and the few statistical and technical words included are simply explained. Occasionally, though, the text comes close to over-simplification. For example, the concluding sentence of the chapter on scoring tests (p. 98) warns the reader that "[t]he scores will be used for instruction, and if the scoring is inaccurate, they are not useful for giving good instruction." Some relatively common terms in testing have been unnecessarily replaced by simpler synonyms or explanations. Replacing the useful and fairly simple words "distractor," "cloze," and "open-ended" with "incorrect option," "gap-filling," and "short answer," respectively, is unlikely to benefit teachers who are going to read other books or papers on testing.

There were some omissions that I felt were questionable. The book contains two appendices with a comprehensive list of websites and Internet resources related to language testing, but it lacks an annotated bibliography or list of suggested readings. Although many Internet sites are informative, they skip the rigorous and important reviewing process most books go through before publication. Also lacking is a discussion or description of the important concept of construct validity in the chapter on validity and reliability. Yet another conspicuous omission is the missing reference for the only scholar cited, Dell Hymes.

Readers should also be aware that some of the examples are weak. The authors warn against writing "illogical" alternatives in response options for multiple-choice questions (p. 38). Although it is not explained or clear what "illogical" means in this context, I assume it refers to morphological or syntactic errors in the response options. It is surprising, therefore, that some sample items contain grammatical errors (pp. 74, 75, 108). These and any other errors in the options should be avoided as they may lead to negative washback (Heaton, 1975; Henning, 1987). In another chapter, the definition of a subjective test has been so over-simplified that it is incorrect. The primary distinction between objective (e.g., multiple-choice) and subjective (e.g., essay or open-ended) test questions is the number and type of possible responses; but according to the text "[i]n a subjective test, the answers are not right or wrong" (p. 9). While this and many other explanations are simple, they are not always accurate.

In terms of design, the overall layout of the book is clear and organized. Appropriately divided and titled and generously spaced chapters

and paragraphs help make the book less daunting than many other books on testing. However, the detailed table of contents and list of websites are not very well arranged. The headings and sub-headings are so oddly indented and spaced that scanning for terms is time-consuming, especially since there is no index or glossary.

Despite these drawbacks, the book delivers on its promise to help readers understand the basic issues and concepts in language testing. However, teachers who are interested in applying testing concepts will have to consult more comprehensive texts. For those only interested in understanding basic testing concepts, it will be difficult to find a book on language testing as short and easy to read as this one.

#### References

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***Affect in Language Learning***. Jane Arnold, Editor. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 346 pp.

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In her introduction editor Jane Arnold defines affect broadly as "aspects of emotion, feeling, mood or attitude which condition behavior." After an overview of affect as it relates to learning, she presents seventeen articles written for this volume by contributors from different parts of the world, variously involved in language research, teaching, or teacher training from primary to higher education.

The articles are arranged in three groups. The first concerns the learner, his neurophysiology, memory, anxiety, ego boundaries, and self-esteem. The second involves the teacher, discussing reflective teaching, language learning facilitation, promotion of learner autonomy, and group dynamics. The third group deals with the interaction of teacher and students, particularly teaching methodologies that incorporate the affective approach: cooperative learning, Suggestopedia, and Neurolinguistic Programming. Specific affective teaching techniques such as visualization and humanistic activities are described in detail. An article on the unique

assessment necessary with this type of learning brings this section to an end. A short epilogue touching upon the problems, politics, and pragmatics of affect in the classroom is followed by a 27-page reference section and subject and author indexes.

In the editor's words this book is addressed to "the world-wide language teaching community" and is an attempt to persuade them of the merits of affective teaching. In this respect, the book succeeds well. It is written at a level that the average language teacher can understand and does not assume extensive background in linguistics or educational theory. All of the articles, even those of a theoretical nature, make direct references to the learner and to situations in the classroom. Articles on classroom applications offer a number of carefully explained, practical activities not found in other sources. Teachers in Japan will be pleased at how many times the Japanese language learner is mentioned. All in all, the range of articles goes far to assure teachers that, no matter what type of student or philosophy of teaching they are working with, the affective approach is an indispensable component of successful language instruction.

Given that the book's purpose is to promote affective teaching, it is understandable that there is little space devoted to the problems likely to arise when using this approach. The caveats of the editor at the beginning of the book and a short, critical article at the end fail to offer remedies for such problems as cliques in the classroom and very fluid student motivation and goals, situations which have troubled us in our attempts to teach effectively at the university level. Also, some of the articles may give teachers a false sense of confidence. Neurolinguistic Programming activities, while highly effective, require a teacher to have solid training in this area. The same might be said for humanistic teaching. This point could have been stressed more.

These criticisms aside, we have found *Affect in Language Learning*, the first teacher education volume we know of devoted exclusively to affect, to present a persuasive argument for the use of affective teaching in all types of language classrooms.

***Other Floors, Other Voices: A Textography of a Small University Building.*** John Swales. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1998. 230 pp.

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*Other Floors, Other Voices* is described by its author, John Swales, as a "textography," that is, it is an ethnographic study of the kinds of texts that are produced and of the people who produce them in one three-story building at the University of Michigan. Each floor houses a different department, each of which may as well be on an entirely different planet, from the fast-paced, constantly changing Computing Resource Site at the bottom, to the stately Herbarium engaged in the painstaking task of collecting and classifying the *flora Novo-Galictiana* in the middle, to Swales' own department, the English Language Institute, at the top. One of the main joys of this well-written book is the way Swales succeeds in capturing the flavor of each of these worlds, in making us see and understand them as insiders, and in conveying the enthusiasm and, in some cases, even passion, with which the inhabitants of these worlds engage in their work.

Swales is perhaps best known for his *Genre Analysis* (1990), a work that has had an enormous impact on the study of academic writing. Its influence persists because it goes beyond a meticulous but somewhat limited description of the "steps" and "moves" typical of academic research articles to try to explain the reason those particular rhetorical patterns exist. Swales does this by linking genre to discourse communities, groups of people who share certain goals, and who use language in distinctive ways in order to realize them. Discourse communities, Swales claims, *own* genres; and thus we need to account for them if we are to understand and teach academic writing. But what a discourse community is, or even whether it exists at all, are highly debatable questions. Two examples that Swales gives of discourse communities are a stamp collectors' club (Swales' own hobby), which has been criticized as too small and specialized to be of much use (Bex, 1996), and academic disciplines, which critics argue tend to be too big and diffuse (Johns, 1997).

*Other Floors, Other Voices* is Swales' response to these critics. In the final chapter, entitled "Reflections," he acknowledges the limitations of his previous work and provides a useful summary of important studies on genre and discourse communities that have been published since *Genre Analysis*. Building on this theoretical work and grounding his

own view in the real people and practices that are examined in this study, he offers a reworking of the notion of discourse community, or at least one kind, namely a Place Discourse Community (PDC). In doing so, he claims to strengthen the position of the bulls against the bears in the debate about whether or not discourse communities exist. (Curiously though, he places himself amongst the undecided in his survey of the field.)

Swales ends the book by seeing how each of the three floors matches up to his definition of a PDC. The botanists qualify without question (although not just the department, but the field overall appears to be remarkably close-knit and respectful of its traditions); the English Language Institute is borderline because of the division in the department between the conservative ESL testers and the more innovative EAP faculty; the computer technicians fail outright. This evaluation, however, raises more questions than it purports to resolve. According to Swales' definition, discourse communities depend on "old timers" who can play a key authoritative role in regulating that community's discourse. Internet technology support is a recent field and computer technicians who work there are typically young and not committed to a career in the academic world. Swales notes that they produce little in the way of "texts" that might serve to create this kind of community identity. What he does not address, however, is the way in which the technical staff probably have developed genres for talking about their work and getting jobs done, both amongst themselves and with the users they assist. Inevitably, Swales' own predilections may have colored his argument. His respect for and fascination with the work of the botanists (remember Swales is a keen philatelist) may have led him to privilege the discourse traditions upheld in the Herbarium and to overlook newer but nevertheless (it may turn out) enduring discourse features of the more dynamic computer technicians.

From the theoretical perspective, the concepts of discourse communities and hence of genre remain as "slippery" (Swales, 1990, p. 33) as ever, and anyone looking to this book for clarification on those points as an aid to teaching academic English will probably come away frustrated. On the other hand, thinking about discourse communities should make us consider the "communities" in which we find ourselves at work. If your place of work is anything like mine, you may find the idea of being a member of any kind of community of practice pretty far fetched. But you may discover, like me, that this book sparks an interest in what happens on the floor above and on the floor below. A discourse community may be an ideal that your department falls short of, but there can be nothing wrong with talking to colleagues about what sort of community it is and what it could be.

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***Representation and Process: Proceedings of the 3rd PacSLRF Vol. 1.*** Peter Robinson, Editor. Tokyo: PacSLRF, 1999. vi + 335 pp.

***Pragmatics and Pedagogy: Proceedings of the 3rd PacSLRF Vol. 2.*** Nicholas O. Jungheim and Peter Robinson, Editors. Tokyo: PacSLRF, 1999. vi + 306 pp.

***Individual Differences in Foreign Language Learning: Effects of Aptitude, Intelligence and Motivation.*** Steve Cornwell and Peter Robinson, Editors. Tokyo: Aoyama Gakuin University, 2000. vi + 182 pp.

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The English Department at Aoyama Gakuin University, Tokyo, recently hosted two important conferences in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). The 3rd Pacific Second Language Research Forum, held in March 1998, brought together noted SLA researchers, including Gabriele Kasper, Michael Long, Paul Meara, and Larry Selinker, from within the Pacific/South East Asia region and beyond. The second SLA conference, Individual Differences and Second Language Research Forum: Effects of Aptitude, Intelligence and Motivation, held in March 1999, included valuable information on research studies and instruments designed specifically for Japanese foreign language learners. Selected papers from the two conferences are now available. These publications provide readers with a sample of the diverse and sophisticated SLA research currently being conducted inside and outside Japan, as well as an indication of the direction in which research in second language education is headed.

A collection of papers from the PacSLRF Forum has been printed in two volumes. The first volume, *Representation and Process: Proceedings of the 3rd Pacific Second Language Research Forum, Vol. 1*, edited by Peter Robinson, deals with issues connected with the representation

and processing of second languages. The thirty papers contained in the first volume have been divided into six groups. The first group of papers describes interlanguage grammars and, referring to recent work in generative grammar, explains how second language learners acquire these grammars. One question raised in the first group is how much access L2 learners have to Universal Grammar; a second question is how best to explain the transfer of L1 in L2 learning. The second set of papers studies learners of Japanese as a second language, focusing on issues of syntax, phonology, discourse, and pragmatics. The third looks at ESL learners from a number of L1 backgrounds, studying how tense-aspect distinctions are acquired. Included in this group are Chinese students of Japanese. The fourth section, phonology and L2 processing, deals with the processing of second language speech in the areas of phonetics, phonology, and syntax. The fifth examines the relationship between interlanguage development and variation in L2 use. Here the controversial issue of fossilization is addressed. The final set of papers addresses second language attrition. Factors such as the effect of age and proficiency on second language loss, and the course of attrition are considered. Students of English, Japanese, and Chinese as a second language are examined in these studies.

The second volume of PacSLRF papers, *Pragmatics and Pedagogy: Proceedings of the Pacific Second Language Research Forum, Vol. 2*, edited by Nicholas O. Jungheim and Peter Robinson, addresses issues related to the acquisition of second language pragmatics and pedagogy. The twenty-eight papers in this volume have been organized in five sections. The first group of papers are concerned with the acquisition of rules governing second language use in oral and written communication. This section includes the plenary given by Gabriele Kasper, who discusses various methods used in second language pragmatics research, focusing on the potential of self-report. The second section addresses issues in the acquisition of second language vocabulary. Of particular interest is the plenary speech by Paul Meara, who argues the need for English language teachers to rethink their one-sided approach to work on vocabulary acquisition, a consequence of focusing almost exclusively on H. E. Palmer's research agenda. Also included in the second section are discussions of the roles of learning strategies and beliefs, and the effects of formal and informal settings on vocabulary development. The third section studies issues in L2 pedagogic task design, such as task complexity and the connection between task familiarity and improvement. The effects of focus-on-form communicative tasks on second language acquisition are also considered. The fourth group of papers addresses issues related to L2 pedagogy, such as the impact of

explicit learning and implicit learning on second language acquisition, and the effects of dialogue on second language writing. Student attitude towards pair work and its effect on L2 learning is also discussed. The fifth and final set of papers examines the relationship between L2 listening and the development of reading. Included in this group is a method for improving L2 reading speed.

A selection of papers from the second SLA conference, introduced by the editors, Steve Cornwell and Peter Robinson, have been published in one volume entitled *Individual Differences in Foreign Language Learning: Effects of Aptitude, Intelligence and Motivation*. The eleven papers contained in the collection outline research into individual differences conducted in secondary and tertiary Japanese classrooms, as well as in Taiwan, Turkey, the U.K., and the U.S.A. Two central SLA issues provide a unifying theme for the papers. The first issue is how individual differences in cognitive abilities affect the development of second language knowledge and skills. The second issue is how differences in affective and personality variables contribute to L2 learning success. These include factors such as motivation, anxiety, learning styles and attitudes towards learning English. Several papers in the collection look at the influence of attitudes and motivation on English acquisition. Others examine the relationship between ethnic status, social identity and L2 proficiency. Of particular interest to those in Japan is the paper from McClelland explaining the need to take into account the unique sociocultural context of Japan and adapt test measures specifically to Japanese learners. Other Japan-related papers provide information on instruments which measure aptitude and motivation in Japanese. Translated versions of Gardner and Lambert's Attitudes and Motivation Test Battery and Sick and Irie's language aptitude instrument developed for Japanese foreign language students are two examples. Certainly, the availability of instruments designed specifically for the Japanese learner is an exciting find.

These publications contain more than 70 papers providing readers with a comprehensive sample of the second language research now being conducted in Japan, as well as an opportunity to review papers given by leading SLA researchers overseas. Together, the proceedings provide an in-depth current perspective on a variety of important second language issues and suggest the direction of much future Japanese SLA research. They will no doubt be valuable reading for educators in Japan for a number of years to come.

To order the PacSLRF or Individual Differences conference proceedings, contact Peter Robinson, Department of English, Aoyama Gakuin University, 4-4-25 Shibuya, Shibuya-ku, Tokyo 150-8366, or by e-mail at <peterr@cl.aoyama.ac.jp>.