

# Reviews

***Innovation in Language Teaching and Learning: The Case of Japan.* Hayo Reinders, Stephen Ryan, and Sachiko Nakamura (Eds.). Palgrave Macmillan, 2019. xvi + 295 pp. e-book <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-12567-7>**

*Reviewed by*  
John Bankier  
Kanagawa University

Part of a series on innovative language teaching and learning in specific national contexts, the 20 authors in this volume describe how teachers, learners, and administrators in Japan innovate across contexts from primary education to lifelong learning.

Setting the scene is the first chapter, Philip Seargeant's "English in Japan in an Era of Global Uncertainty." As Seargeant observes, while English's place as "the" global language is increasingly contested, in Japan its power is largely undiminished. Indeed, government language policy aims to create international individuals with English communication skills, although these goals are seen by many educators as incompatible with the existing examination culture. Rather than following top-down government pronouncements, Seargeant argues that modern language education is founded on an awareness of learners' ideas and aspirations for English and the roles and identities the language has in the world today. The following 12 chapters provide ample cases of such bottom-up innovations and are separated by educational context: primary, secondary, university, and lifelong learning. However, in this review, I will show commonalities among chapters based on the following scope: teaching practice, single course design, and design of whole language programmes.

Three chapters describe new teaching practices. In "Inviting Children's Views for Designing Digital Game Tasks," Yuko Goto Butler addresses homeroom teachers' lack of fluency in English, newly incorporated into

the primary school curriculum. She suggests that digital games can help children learn English and can be designed with children's input, making the games more interesting and increasing learners' autonomy. I found her step-by-step explanation valuable, much like the details in "It's Your Turn: EFL Teaching and Learning with Tabletop Games" by James York, Jonathan deHaan, and Peter Hourdequin. These authors describe how new activities can fill gaps in language learning in Japan, in this case using tabletop games to provide an authentic, communicative experience that addresses non-linguistic goals. They describe how learners analysed language in game rules, discussed gameplay, and took on post-game projects. In "Innovating with the 'The Collaborative Social' in Japan," Tim Murphey also emphasises non-linguistic, social goals, showing how normally dry language tests can be re-envisioned to lead to students becoming more socially adept and increased feelings of belonging. The chapter provides many practical examples, such as Murphey's concept of "social testing" (p. 239) in which asking for help from peers becomes part of the test.

Four chapters describe how authors transformed their language courses. In "CLIL in Comparison with PPP: A Revolution in ELT by Competency-Based Language Education," Makoto Ikeda responds to the need for global skills and knowledge by making language education a meaningful, cognitive activity. He developed a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) course for primary schoolchildren and compared this to existing present-practice-produce (PPP) methods, arguing CLIL led to more challenging and meaningful language use. Especially illuminating are how support from the head teacher, the presence of skilled and approachable teachers, and collaboration with specialists outside the school allowed Ikeda to run his experimental course. In a similar primary-school context, Noriko Ishihara, Terumi Orihashi, and Zachary Clark promoted peace and human rights in "Innovation in Elementary Classrooms: Integrating the Teaching of English, History and Peace Linguistics." English-beginner students engaged in scaffolded dialogues with dolls that had been donated by US citizens back in 1927. The children were encouraged to communicate with the dolls politely, respectfully, and empathetically. The authors hoped that using this "language of empathy" (p. 51) could cultivate children's future openness to other languages and cultures. As noted by several authors in the volume, the lack of a fixed curriculum and formal assessment at this level allowed the authors greater freedom to innovate.

Two chapters discuss how innovation in language course design can address the ageing society in Japan. In "Learning Across Generations: A Small-

Scale Initiative,” Stephen Ryan and Kay Irie describe how high school students independently developed an English course for older learners. Rather than doing so during the tightly-controlled English curriculum, the students planned the course in their *integrated studies* period. This loosely-defined period was established in the national curriculum to encourage experiential and autonomous learning through problem-solving activities, and could be adapted by teachers (and students) for non-traditional language learning activities like these. Through interactions with the older learners, the students’ unidirectional views of learning were transformed, as they came to value the older learners’ experience and English proficiency. In “Developing a Foreign Language Geragogy: Teaching Innovations for Older Learners,” Danya Ramírez-Gómez addresses the lack of materials and methodology specifically designed to teach foreign languages (Spanish) to the over-60s. Among several practical tips, she adapted existing textbooks by increasing fonts sizes and re-recorded audio tracks to remove background noise, low pitches, or unclear speech. In the classroom, concurrent tasks (e.g., writing while talking) and activities involving a great deal of movement were avoided. Ramírez-Gómez concludes that older learners’ difficulties stem from methodological inadequacy rather than “age-related cognitive transformations” (p. 181).

Finally, four chapters describe how innovative programmes were developed. In “An Innovative Approach to In-Service Teacher Training for Teaching English at Japanese Public Elementary Schools,” Maiko Ikeda, Hiroyuki Imai, and Osamu Takeuchi target the aforementioned need for primary teachers to teach English, establishing a training programme within the existing Japanese in-service training system, contrasting with the top-down, imported approach favoured by MEXT. The authors intensively trained and dispatched undergraduate and postgraduate students of ELT/TESOL to provide short, voluntary training sessions for busy primary-school teachers. While otherwise successful, in two schools, teachers’ negative attitudes to the training mirrored those of school administrators who did not require teachers improve their English teaching, described as “a no-show of leadership” (p. 277).

In contrast, two descriptions of new university programmes demonstrate how institutions can enable innovation. Contesting the idea of international English based on native-speaker norms, in “What Does ‘Teaching English as a Lingua Franca’ Mean? Insights from University ELF Instructors,” Ayako Suzuki discusses the development of an English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) programme catering to students across a university. Cost-cutting was the

impetus for the programme, consolidating language programmes in one central facility, accompanied by a desire to attract MEXT funding. The newly-established programme faced challenges including the dearth of ELF materials and instructors' lack of experience with (and varying degrees of investment in) ELF. Suzuki also notes that the initial vagueness of programme goals actually facilitated discussions with the university management. Kay Irie's fascinating contribution, "An Insider's View: Launching a University Program," describes the torturous three-year process of obtaining MEXT approval and the subsequent challenges of running a CLIL programme for Japanese learners unused to self-directed learning. Responding to the shrinking population, Irie describes how a conservative university was persuaded that CLIL could help it to stand out and attract students who were interested in becoming global human resources.

In "Self-Access Learning and Advising: Promoting Language Learner Autonomy Beyond the Classroom," Jo Mynard considers how types of self-access learning centres (SALCs) provide the outside-class, language learning support frequently lacking in Japan, challenging a top-down view of learning only in classrooms. She describes on page 192 how a well-run and well-funded "Social-Supportive SALC" can facilitate autonomous language learning. However, an informal "Developing SALC" (often run by volunteers) can be more innovative if it is managed outside of university administrative constraints. In contrast, what Mynard calls an "Administrative Center" has largely been set up in Japanese universities to look good in brochures but lacks the staff, resources, and administrative support necessary to facilitate autonomous learning.

If there are any criticisms of this admirable volume, the overall organisation by learning context could discourage some casual readers from looking outside their usual scope of interest. In addition, I found the concept of innovation itself somewhat undefined. In this volume, innovation usually meant *things which are new to Japan*, but sometimes also referred to *things which are new anywhere*. As the volume is also addressed to readers outside Japan, I would have liked this distinction to have been highlighted more consistently. In summary, this timely collection showcases the many ways in which innovation happens in Japan, often spurred by global and national demographic and social transformations. Many *JALT Journal* readers will empathise with the constraints faced by the authors, but I for one was heartened by how they found space to innovate.

***Introducing English for Specific Purposes.* Laurence Anthony. Routledge, 2018. ix + 210 pp. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781351031189>**

*Reviewed by*

Douglas Bell

University of Nottingham Ningbo China

As with other titles in the Routledge Introductions series, the aim of *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* is to provide readers with an overview of the key concepts and practices in its designated topic area.

The book consists of three broad sections: “Contextualizing ESP,” “Understanding the four pillars of ESP,” and “Applying ESP in real-world settings.” These are then divided into a series of individual chapters, each of which sets out to introduce both theoretical and practical elements of ESP. In every chapter, Anthony also raises awareness of what he sees as contentious issues in ESP and invites readers’ critical reflection via a series of task-based activities and questions. Newcomers to the field, or those studying ESP as part of an academic course (e.g., MA TESOL) are likely to find these particularly thought-provoking and useful.

In Section 1, the focus is on situating ESP first within a wider ELT context, then within the world at large. Anthony begins by providing some useful definitions and a synopsis of ESP’s early history, initially by referencing the work of ESP stalwarts such as Hutchinson and Waters (1987) and Strevens (1988), then by drawing on later authors such as Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998). Also in these opening chapters, there is an extended discussion around some of the ways in which ESP differs from mainstream ELT, and Anthony invites his readers to consider how ESP may be differentiated from more recent approaches such as content-based instruction (CBI), content and language integrated learning (CLIL), problem-based instruction (PBI) and English-medium instruction (EMI). Drawing the readers’ attention to these practices arguably adds a new dimension to the more typical and well-trod definitions of ESP found in earlier texts and marks an awareness of how both ESP and ELT in general have continued to develop. The closing chapter of Section 1 then sets the context for Section 2 by identifying what Anthony contends are the four main pillars of ESP: *needs analysis, learning objectives, materials and methods, and evaluation.*

The opening chapter of Section 2, “Identifying needs in the design of ESP courses and programs,” begins by drawing on some recent work on needs analysis by Brown (2016) and suggests that needs can be seen as reflecting four different viewpoints: a *diagnostic view*, a *discrepancy view*, a *democratic view*, and an *analytic view*. As Anthony acknowledges, the first three of these viewpoints owe much to the earlier research by Hutchinson and Waters (1987). In discussing the ground covered by these authors, however, there is no real mention of their concept of “learning needs” (p. 54; pp. 60-64). One might argue that this notion of what ESP learners need to do to learn was the main contribution from Hutchinson and Waters to the debates on needs analysis at that time. For a chapter in which readers are assured they will “learn all about needs analysis” (p. 63), this omission seemed rather conspicuous. While the references to recent authors such as Flowerdew (2013) are to be applauded, it was a pity not to see more detailed mention of the work of John Munby (1978), as his Communication Needs Processor has long been cited as one of the important historical milestones in the development of needs analysis. In this regard, a little more acknowledgement of some of the earlier research would not go amiss.

Chapter 5 deals with what Anthony sees as the second pillar of ESP, learning objectives. The structure of this chapter appears to borrow quite heavily from Hutchinson and Waters (1987) in identifying register analysis, rhetorical analysis, genre analysis, and metacognitive skills as key historical stages and principles in course design, although a new and most welcome addition here was Anthony’s brief discussion of the role played by corpora. The contentious issue for Chapter 5 questions to what extent practitioners should have specialist subject knowledge. In proposing a solution for dealing with unfamiliar lexis, Anthony makes a credible case for the applications of concordancing tools as a practical means of capturing authentic ESP language in use.

In Chapter 6, Anthony turns his attention to the third pillar of ESP, materials and methods. The discussion of methods here is limited to just two pages, possibly leaving the impression that more could have been said. For anyone familiar with the existing ESP literature, there is a strong sense of *déjà vu* in Anthony’s discussion of the role that materials play, how to evaluate an ESP course book, and whether or not to adopt, adapt, or create materials from scratch. Some new and very useful contributions however are evident in the sections on using technology in the adaptation and creation of ESP materials, and it is here that Anthony’s obvious expertise in the practical applications of text analysis software fully comes into its own. Teachers new to ESP mate-

rial design are likely to find the practical exercises on how to use AntConc (Anthony, 2017) illuminating, and the discussion of data-driven learning (DDL) segues nicely into the chosen contentious issue for Chapter 6, the matter of authenticity.

The final chapter of Section 2 addresses the fourth pillar of ESP by covering evaluation of learners, instructors, and courses or programs. As in the preceding chapters, Anthony opens with some definitions, and then discusses issues common to evaluation such as reliability, validity, and practicality. The main focus here is more on EAP contexts and Anthony rightfully acknowledges that the research on ESP evaluation in occupational settings remains relatively sparse. Nonetheless, there is some helpful discussion of diagnostic assessment in workplace contexts and readers are provided with a practical task on assessing learners in an English for Business Purposes setting. The contentious issue for this chapter introduces the notion of stakeholder deception and suggests that ESP learners, instructors, and administrators may all on occasion find themselves being economical with the truth. As with any other human endeavor, there can be little doubt that deceptions do sometimes take place, but readers may rightfully question whether or not this topic deserves to be positioned as a contentious issue in ESP. With the exception of plagiarism cases in EAP, deception is yet to appear as a key concern in any of the mainstream ESP literature.

The last section of the book, Section 3, deals with the application of ESP in real-world settings and the final three chapters here focus on practical concerns, such as the implementation of ESP in different contexts, the inherent challenges in ESP, and the future of ESP as a discipline.

In Chapter 8, Anthony makes a welcome distinction between ESP in what he terms *ideal*, *opportunistic*, and *just-in-time* settings, and readers already working in the field are likely to recognize many of the scenarios he presents. For newcomers to ESP, a series of tasks asks them to imagine themselves in these situations and reflect on what they themselves might do. This very useful, hands-on dimension of real-world ESP practice is then extended in Chapter 9 with a selection of specific challenges that ESP practitioners might face. The challenges themselves are highly credible (e.g., how to make ESP evaluation procedures authentic) and may ultimately serve as a personal checklist and reference point for readers.

The book concludes with a discussion in Chapter 10 of what the future holds for ESP under four main headings: globalization, curriculum design, materials and methods, and ESP research. Across each of these domains, Anthony confidently predicts continued disciplinary growth. Readers are

invited to formulate their own proposals for ESP's future, and the book closes with one final contentious issue, the matter of critical ESP. Anthony questions whether ESP learners should also be encouraged to challenge how their particular discourse communities operate, rather than simply accepting the status quo.

In conclusion, *Introducing English for Specific Purposes* provides an interesting overview of contemporary ESP. It is likely to be of particular value to those not yet familiar with some of the more canonical ESP works and may well serve as an encouragement for such readers to access some of those earlier texts.

### References

- Anthony, L. (2017). *AntConc* (version 3.5.0) [Computer Software]. Waseda University. <http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antwordprofiler>
- Brown, J. D. (2016). *Introducing needs analysis and English specific purposes*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315671390>
- Dudley-Evans, T., & St. John, M. J. (1998). *Developments in English for specific purposes: A multi-disciplinary approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Flowerdew, L. (2013). Needs analysis and curriculum development in ESP. In B. Paltridge & S. Starfield (Eds.), *The handbook of English for specific purposes* (pp. 301-322). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118339855.ch17>
- Hutchinson T., & Waters, A. (1987). *English for specific purposes. A learning-centred approach*. Cambridge University Press.
- Munby, J. (1978). *Communicative syllabus design: A sociolinguistic model for designing the content of purpose-specific language programmes*. Cambridge University Press.
- Stevens, P. (1988). ESP after twenty years: A re-appraisal. In M. Tickoo (Ed.), *ESP: State of the art* (pp. 1-13). SEAMEO Regional Language Centre.



***Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language*. I.S.P. Nation and Rob Waring. Routledge, 2020. xi + 200 pp. e-book <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780367809256>**

*Reviewed by*

Patrick Conaway

Shokei Gakuin University

Extensive Reading (ER) has gathered a great deal of interest in recent years for its potential for aiding language development. Despite such interest, teachers who would like to adopt extensive reading for their classroom are often at a loss as to how to implement a program and gain acceptance from the administration. Books on language teaching often tend to either focus on specific activities for practical use within the classroom without much focus upon research, or present academic research with complex theoretical frameworks, which can sometimes be difficult and less applicable for language teachers. The aim of *Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language* by I.S.P. Nation and Rob Waring is to provide anyone, including newcomers to extensive reading, with concrete advice on how to start an extensive reading program while also introducing research-based evidence on the merits of extensive reading.

The book is organized into 13 chapters, spanning a range of topics from creating extensive reading programs to describing key research studies in ER and introducing several other related topics. The first five chapters serve as a handbook for starting up an ER program, while Chapters 6 through 9 introduce key extensive reading research studies. The remaining four chapters cover a variety of topics that may be of interest to teachers, researchers, and materials developers such as developing reading fluency, conducting research in ER, and the process for creating leveled reading materials.

The first five chapters of this book would be of particular interest to those who are thinking of developing an ER program at their institution. In the first chapter, the authors explain the key features of ER and outline its role in a language learning program. From the very beginning, they take the position that despite being an important component of a language learning course, ER is not a panacea or a quick fix for the hard work required in second language acquisition. Reading material that is of an appropriate difficulty level for language learners is an essential aspect of extensive reading and in many ER programs language learners read books called *graded readers* to get that

comprehensible input. In the second chapter, Nation and Waring introduce graded readers and explain how the language and structure of graded readers are modified to increase comprehensibility for learners. Most importantly, they illustrate how the comprehensible input of graded readers enables learners to read more and get more enjoyment from their reading. The authors also helpfully include web links to the Extensive Reading Foundation (ERF) website (<https://erfoundation.org/wordpress/>) for detailed lists of graded reader titles and in-depth explanations of difficulty scales. At the end of the chapter, the common criticisms of simplified graded readers are addressed, as well as the issue of transitioning students from reading the modified language of learner-level appropriate literature with graded readers to handling authentic reading material written for L1 readers.

In the third chapter, Nation and Waring share eight case studies of ER programs in a variety of different contexts. These concrete examples of successful programs would be valuable for teachers or committees envisioning and proposing the creation of an extensive reading program at their school. The diversity of ways in which the teachers at each institution provided comprehensible input for their students and assessed their students' progress can be a good reference for those designing an ER program. The fourth chapter further supports program creation by directly answering frequently asked questions such as "How can learners know which books are the right level for them?" (p. 58) and "How do I measure if learners are learning from the extensive reading program?" (p. 66). Chapter 5 focuses on how vocabulary is learned from extensive reading and acts as a bridge between the practicalities of starting an extensive reading program and conducting research on extensive reading. In addition to explaining how extensive reading can aid vocabulary development, the authors also describe activities unrelated to ER (e.g., looking up words in a dictionary, writing unfamiliar words onto flash cards) that can support vocabulary learning. They then introduce the concepts of vocabulary knowledge breadth and depth, stages of word learning, and word frequency, which figure prominently in the research described in later chapters.

In Chapter 6, the authors critically evaluate the evidence for extensive reading in eight influential studies focusing on experimental and corpus-based research. They recommend that these studies "are the ones most suitable to be used as evidence when advocating extensive reading" (p. 82). The eight studies are conveniently presented in order of the strength of evidence. The methodology and results of each study are described in detail, followed by commentary on the significance of the findings. In Chapters 7

through 9, Nation and Waring continue the discussion of research-based evidence for extensive reading with content structured around the specific effects of extensive reading on motivation, reading comprehension and fluency, and vocabulary learning. Each chapter is further divided by theme, briefly presenting the results of pertinent studies. For example, “Research Findings: Motivation and Pushing Learners to Read” (Chapter 7) includes sections related to intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, learner agency, and factors that can discourage learners. While these four chapters provide empirical evidence to help teachers gain acceptance for an extensive reading program, they also could be very valuable for graduate students with an interest in ER looking to familiarize themselves with key extensive reading research. Personally, these chapters would have been a welcome resource when conducting the literature review for my MA dissertation.

The remaining chapters deal with topics that would likely be of interest to teachers who have already adopted extensive reading and want to dig a little deeper. In Chapter 10, Nation and Waring explain the nature and importance of reading fluency and introduce specific classroom activities that can be used to increase reading speed and outline how reading fluency development activities can be used together with extensive reading (e.g., repeated reading, timed reading). Chapter 11 could serve as a handbook for teachers who would like to conduct their own extensive reading research studies. The list of research areas that have been investigated and common types of experiments can help readers to create and focus future research inquiries. At the end of the chapter, the authors warn the reader of common weaknesses in research studies and offer some advice on how to increase the reliability and validity of a study. This chapter would be very helpful indeed for graduate students who intend to conduct an extensive reading research study for their dissertation. The creation of graded reading materials is addressed in Chapter 12, specifically the process for making a book or series, in which Nation and Waring both have vast experience. Teachers who want to get started in writing and publishing graded readers will be interested in the detailed behind-the-scenes explanation of the various stages of writing a graded reader including the seldom mentioned topic of compliance issues. The final chapter concludes by suggesting several principles for running a successful extensive reading program and outlining a future research agenda to fill the gaps in the existing research, providing an extensive list of research questions that remain to be answered. These unanswered questions about ER not only serve as a call to action for researchers, but also a caution for teachers; there are still many assumptions regarding

ER that have not been thoroughly investigated. The authors then conclude this final chapter by reiterating the importance of ER with a brief summary of the rationale together with the necessary caveats.

*Teaching Extensive Reading in Another Language* would be a beneficial addition to the reading list of those who are interested in starting an extensive reading program, conducting their own research study, or improving an already established extensive reading program. By avoiding unexplained jargon and long sentences, the writing style is approachable even for those who are unaccustomed to reading research articles. In this title from the ESL & Applied Linguistics Professional Series by Routledge, Nation and Waring have made the contents accessible also to educators who use English as a second or foreign language. While the hyperlinks within the table of contents and index of the ebook edition make it easy for the reader to jump directly to the sections that they are interested in, the conversational tone of the writing and organization of chapters make reading from start to finish comfortable as well.

***The Language of Humor: An Introduction.* Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L. F. Nilsen. Cambridge University Press, 2019. xiv + 387 pp. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108241403>**

*Reviewed by*  
Scott Gardner  
Okayama University

Alleen Pace Nilsen and Don L. F. Nilsen are pioneers in the field of humor studies. Since the 1970s, their borderless approach to humor research has incorporated practically every academic, professional, and social pursuit, from anthropology to architecture to toponymy to TV sitcoms. Their original WHIM (Western Humor and Irony Membership) research group at Arizona State University in the USA evolved into the International Society for Humor Studies (ISHS), whose journal, *Humor*, is the preeminent research vehicle today for humor studies across many disciplines. This book, *The Language of Humor: An Introduction*, is a hybrid textbook and resource book providing background and collected material for the Nilsens' ongoing courses entitled "Humor Across the Disciplines." PowerPoint files for each chapter offer supplementary images and quotes and are available for free from the

Association for Applied and Therapeutic Humor website: <https://aath.memberclicks.net/don-and-alleen-power-points>

From a first glance at the title, *The Language of Humor* might appear to be a standard linguistic discussion of humor, along the lines of *Language Play* (Crystal, 1998) or *Meaning and Humour* (Goatly, 2012). But the Nilsens are on a different mission here. I believe they wish to show that humor is *a language unto itself*, that it has communicative and social functions of its own which are often (but not always) conveyed through and alongside ordinary language. Understanding humor as its own communication medium can help us see it as more of a distinct cognitive phenomenon of its own, not developing as a side effect of language use but rooted as deeply in us as our ability to use verbal language.

Chapters are ordered alphabetically, each highlighting a different discipline. There is no need to move unidirectionally through them. Indeed, similar material can occasionally be found in more than one chapter, usually with a reminder that those ideas appear elsewhere. Each chapter also has a Points of Departure section to spur further discussion. For this review I will summarize just a few standout chapters.

The “Introduction and Overview” could well be the most beneficial to an instructor wanting to show students the relationship humor has with all aspects of human life and interaction. The Nilsens’ own theory of humor described here includes three main aspects: humor’s features, its functions, and its subjects (pp. 2-3). Humor’s *features* include the many forms, linguistic or otherwise, that it takes. Its *functions* are the many reasons that people employ humor: to cope with hardship; to bond with others; to criticize people, traditions, or cultures; to release mental pressure, and so forth. Humor’s *subjects* are not limited to individual targets or “butts” of jokes, but include the backdrop of institutions, traditions, and group associations that we all participate in and share from the inside—or look at with awe, confusion, or disdain from the outside. This tripartite theory, though “not a leak-proof umbrella” (p. 1), tries to provide adequate cover for the myriad specialized humor theories in existence today.

The “Education and Children’s Literature” chapter is in some ways a second introduction. It states the purpose behind the Nilsens’ courses (as developed for both university and community education contexts) and describes how they typically run the classes they teach: Introduce concepts and challenge students to bring in humor examples that support or refute those concepts. Here we also find an important conclusion (attributed to John Morreall) about the value of humor in education, summarized thus:

Humor can foster analytic, critical, and divergent-thinking skills. It can also get and hold students' attention, increase their retention of learned material, relieve stress, and build rapport between teachers and students. (p. 75)

These claims of humor's educational value continue to be researched, including in language education (see for instance Bell & Pomerantz, 2016), but schoolteachers can attest to the idea that a healthy classroom humor climate can be a boon to the study of any school subject.

In the "Gerontology" chapter, we find an interesting observation about the butts of jokes. A famous comedy writer had once claimed at an early ISHS conference that, for books and television at least, it is funnier to laugh at others than to laugh at oneself. However, in their years of teaching humor courses the Nilsens came to the conclusion that, in everyday social (and educational) interaction, the opposite is true: Laughing at oneself has a greater effect. This may have important implications for educators thinking about how to include humor in talking about themselves and their students.

The chapters on "Linguistics," "Literature," and "Rhetoric" all touch on related themes, resembling most closely the book-length linguistic analyses mentioned at the beginning of this review. These chapters include many examples of stylistic and rhetorical devices used, with varying degrees of success, in classic and contemporary literature (there is quite a bit from the Harry Potter series), student compositions, and standup comedy.

The chapters on philosophy and psychology are the most theoretical. The "Philosophy" chapter includes a history of commentary on humor by prominent thinkers in the Western tradition, from Plato to Camus. Importantly though, other philosophical takes on humor can be found scattered throughout the book, as well as non-Western humor traditions such as Mullah Nasruddin stories. The "Psychology" chapter focuses on individuals and how they manifest humor in everyday life. An interesting section on "humor styles" (attributed to Rod Martin and colleagues) boils humor use down to four styles: *affiliative*, *self-enhancing*, *self-defeating*, and *aggressive* (p. 302). These categories try to show how people use humor to bond, to build up or knock themselves down, or to attack. An interesting Point of Departure idea in this chapter suggests having students memorize some philosophical phrases, at least one of which should be humorously posed. While no examples are provided, I imagine something like *Be the kind of human being your dog thinks you are*. After a few days, quiz your students on which phrases they remember best.

The “Sociology” chapter touches on the social role of humor, including people (such as clowns, tricksters, comedians, etc.) who make spreading humor part of their identity or livelihood. A common dictum about humor’s social value is that it helps bond groups together. One caveat of this, however, is that the act of building solidarity with one group may concurrently involve hammering up borders against others. The Nilsens speculate—backed by advice from public speaking coaches—that in some cases it is more important to establish solidarity with group members before engaging in humorous banter. Essentially, the ice should already be broken before you try to break the ice with jokes. This is something of a reversal of the common mantra of humor researchers in sociology (*humor breaks down barriers and builds relationships*) that may be important to teachers.

In all, while some chapters (“Music,” “Performing Arts,” “Politics,” among others) have a very noticeable Western culture bent, and a few references here and there to American politicians or TV commercials may require non-USA-based readers to reach for Google or YouTube, these disciplinary discussions of humor display a wealth of historical and cultural humor knowledge from around the world. The recurrence of themes in different chapters highlights the reality that humor is a kind of communicative medium of its own that assists in expressing all human knowledge.

To conclude, *The Language of Humor* is a manifestation of the way humor acts as a prism on all we see, make, and think about. And like a prism, this book also colorfully illuminates the long and laugh-filled researching lives of Alleen and Don Nilsen.

## References

- Bell, N. D., & Pomerantz, A. (2016). *Humor in the classroom: A guide for language teachers and educational researchers*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203082690>
- Crystal, D. (1998). *Language play*. University of Chicago Press.
- Goatly, A. (2012). *Meaning and humour: Key topics in semantics and pragmatics*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511791536>

***Assessing L2 Listening: Moving Towards Authenticity.* Gary J. Ockey and Elvis Wagner (Eds.). John Benjamins, 2018. xvii + 278 pp. <https://doi.org/10.1075/llt.50>**

*Reviewed by*

Alastair Graham-Marr

Tokyo University of Science

It is well established that language needs to be comprehensible to be learned. That is, we learn when we are exposed to language that is near to our current level of understanding (see Ellis 1994; Lightbown & Spada, 2006). Furthermore, it is also well understood that in order to be competent or fluent in listening, language learners need to be able to comprehend unsheltered language as it occurs in the real-world. However, in order to be comprehensible to lower-level learners, the language that is used to teach and assess students is often simplified. That is, there is a tension between *authenticity* and *comprehensibility*. In *Assessing L2 Listening Moving Towards Authenticity*, Gary Ockey and Elvis Wagner delve into this debate from a listening perspective and make an argument for more authenticity in L2 listening assessment.

The book is divided into four sections, each with a main theme: (1) the use of authentic spoken texts, (2) the effects of accent, (3) the use of audio-visual texts on L2 listening tests, and (4) assessing listening as part of interactive speaking/listening tasks. Each section begins with an overview chapter authored by the co-editors which serves as a literature review for the issue under discussion. Following this introduction, each section contains two or three studies written by various contributing authors, who present readers with different points of view and introduce the reader to the current research direction in each topic area. This approach makes this book a good choice for fourth-year seminar students or first-year graduate students. While the sections can be taken up in any particular order, readers should begin a section with the overview chapter in order to ground themselves.

The first theme is focused on the idea that real-world authentic texts generally feature more instances of connected speech, which include for example, vowel weakening, reductions, linking, elision, and assimilation. In addition, the grammatical patterns and structures of written language differ substantially from spoken language (see for example McCarthy & Carter, 1995). Given that proficiency in a second language should include the ability



to comprehend unsheltered language as it occurs in the real-world, the editors suggest that L2 listening assessment should include such elements in its test construction.

The second theme centers around the importance of using different speech varieties when assessing L2 listening proficiency. The editors point out that while

most high-stakes second language assessments use only 'standard English' speakers for their listening assessment inputs ... in an increasingly globalized world with a multitude of different varieties of English, it is no longer defensible to assume that there is a 'standard English' (p. 6).

However, they also concede that simply including non-standard variants is problematic, as were tests to include ELF (English as a Lingua Franca) varieties, this might unfairly disadvantage some test takers who might not be familiar with the selected speech variety. To better address this issue, the editors introduce studies that have been done to determine the extent to which it is possible for a speaker to sound different, that is have an accent, and yet still be understandable (p. 69).

The third theme addresses the use of visuals when creating L2 listening test items. In most real-world contexts, listeners are presented with visual cues. This presents difficulties with respect to how one operationalizes the construct of L2 listening ability. For example, Field (2013) claims that "visual information is not additional or supplementary to auditory; it forms an intrinsic part of a listening event" (p. 115). However, Buck (2001) suggests that test users "are usually interested in the test taker's language ability rather than the ability to understand subtle visual information" (p. 172). While visual cues can help in comprehension, Ockey and Wagner point out that "there is certainly no consensus on how it affects L2 listening test performance" (p. 136). The editors suggest that "more research examining how individual test takers might vary in their ability to interpret the visual information provided by the visual tests, and their ability to utilize this information to process and comprehend the aural texts is critically needed" (p. 144).

The fourth theme covers the use of interactive tasks in language assessment. While traditionally tests have often been divided up into the skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, if tests are to be authentic and a measure of real-world task performance, then assessing test-takers using interactive tasks seems a natural extension. Presented are studies which

conclude “that oral assessments that require test takers to listen as well as produce oral language are more difficult than oral tests that do not require listening” (p. 204). The editors thus suggest that reporting oral assessment scores as *speaking* scores is problematic, as listening is integral, and that the four-skills paradigm is problematic (p. 192).

Although the editors do proffer a clear definition of authenticity, a more detailed discussion would have been beneficial. To advance the discussion, on page 2, Ockey and Wagner use Bachman and Palmer’s (1996) definition of *authenticity* as “the degree of correspondence of the characteristics of a given language test task to the features of a TLU (target language use) task” (p. 23). Authentic speech is further presented as being speech that is unplanned, spontaneous, and having many more instances of connected speech. However, given the wide phonological variety of non-native English variants, this seems more a description of “native speaker” speech than of authentic speech.

The editors do dedicate a great deal of discussion to the need to include a variety of Englishes in test constructions. They rightly point out that “the use of English among L2 English speakers is greater than English use among L1 speakers” (p. 67). However, many of the studies included in this volume seem to characterize authentic speech as having phonological features that are more characteristic of native-speaker speech.

The editors offer an expansive definition of authenticity which obviously includes communicative events between non-native speakers of English. However, non-native variants might not contain many of the suprasegmental features of connected speech that are assumed to be part of authentic speech. Furthermore, interactions between L1 and L2 speakers, where speech might be purposefully modified both in terms of lexicogrammatical complexity and phonological complexity, according to the Bachman and Palmer definition, must also be considered authentic. However, the editors characterize real-world, unscripted spoken language as being marked by connected speech and spoken grammatical and lexical norms, and are likewise critical of “textbook texts” (p. 20) that are specifically made for L2 learners. The editors point out that “in order to maximize construct validity, it is important that tests of L2 listening ability use spoken texts that are representative of the target language use domain,” and that “it is important to include spoken texts with real-world language characteristics (such as connected speech, hesitation phenomena, oral grammar, etc.)” (p. 24). If authentic speech is marked by connected speech, does this mean that speech that does not contain such characteristics is somehow inauthentic? Phonologically modified

speech in textbooks is described as not being authentic. Would phonologically modified speech at an international engineering conference attended by many non-native English speakers be similarly inauthentic? While the book clearly recognizes the global use of English as a Lingua Franca, many of the arguments in the book would be strengthened if this incongruity were somehow addressed.

Despite this incongruity, the book details many issues that test makers should consider when constructing exams that have a listening component. The editors make the case on page 256 that L2 listening tests should use “spoken texts that have the characteristics of real-world spoken language.” They proffer that such tests would not only have construct validity but could also provide a positive washback effect, where education institutions would be “more willing and likely to integrate these ideas into their curricula and materials, in the hopes of promoting learners’ communicative competence, rather than just their ability to pass a test” (p. 256). This seems a laudable goal.

### References

- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice: Designing and developing useful language tests*. Oxford University Press.
- Buck, G. (2001). *Assessing listening*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511732959>
- Ellis, N. (1994). *Implicit and explicit learning of languages*. Academic Press
- Field, J. (2013). Cognitive validity. In A. Geranpayah & L. Taylor (Eds.), *Examining listening: Research and practice in assessing second language listening* (pp. 77-151). UCLES/Cambridge University Press.
- Lightbown, P., & Spada, N. (2006). *How languages are learned* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- McCarthy, M., & Carter, R. (1995). Spoken grammar: What is it and how can we teach it? *ELT Journal*, 49(3), 207-218. <https://doi.org/10.1093/elt/49.3.207>

***Doing SLA Research with Implications for the Classroom: Reconciling Methodological Demands and Pedagogical Applicability.* Robert M. DeKeyser and Goretta Prieto Botana (Eds.). John Benjamins, 2019. vi + 219 pp. <https://doi.org/10.1075/lllt.52>**

*Reviewed by*

Chris Carl Hale

Akita International University

One of the greatest challenges as an educator in MA TESOL programs is to illustrate for students how SLA research can be applied in the classroom. For many students, there seems little connection to the theories and concepts we cover in SLA and the nitty-gritty practice of real classroom instruction. Krashen's (1985) Comprehensible Input Hypothesis, Vygotsky's (1978) Zone of Proximal Development, or metacognitive comprehension strategies (Vandergrift, 1997) are all well and good as theoretical/hypothetical concepts but can seem of little utility when we are designing our curricula in the moment for our own students. Recently there have been great efforts made to bridge this divide between theory and practice, or "praxis" (Lantolf, 2012), through an emerging approach to second-language teaching called "Instructed SLA" (ISLA). It is in this current push for practicality that Robert M. DeKeyser and Goretta Prieto Botana offer their edited volume, *Doing SLA Research with Implications for the Classroom: Reconciling Methodological Demands and Pedagogical Applicability*. Their volume is part of the Language Learning & Language Teaching (LL&LT) series edited by venerable SLA superstars Nina Spada and Nelleke Van Deusen-Scholl and published by John Benjamins. The chapters presented in this anthology do a fine job of contextualizing SLA theory such that students enrolled in pre- or in-service teacher-education programs can see concretely how the concepts covered in their SLA classes can be applied to their pedagogical practice.

DeKeyser and Bonita devote the first chapter of the book to providing an overview of the current research in ISLA, focusing on the types of questions it can answer, rather than the findings of research in the area per se. One reason for not focusing on the emerging classroom-based research, the authors contend, is because there is actually so little of it. ISLA is still in its infancy, and as such the major journals dealing in second-language teaching and learning have not yet given the approach significant coverage. Though

this volume aims to change that, the editors feel that there is yet to be a momentous shift in that direction. One way to ensure more coverage is to provide an adequately broad definition of what ISLA is, but one also concise enough for readers of this volume to see how each chapter is situated in ISLA. Drawing from Housen and Pierrard, ISLA can be defined as “any systematic attempt to enable or facilitate language learning by manipulating the mechanisms of learning and/or the conditions under which these occur” (p. 2). Loewen expands this definition to call ISLA “a theoretically and empirically based field of academic inquiry that aims to understand how the systematic manipulation of the mechanisms of learning and/or the conditions under which they occur enable or facilitate the development and acquisition of a language other than one’s first” (p. 2). This wording may remind the savvy reader of key components in *action research*—a point to which I will return later.

All of the research chapters in this book follow the same basic structure in that they first present their empirical studies, then provide readers with the studies’ pedagogical implications and methodological take-aways. These last two points are important for readers who are teacher-practitioners hoping to find ways of bringing SLA into their own classrooms by seeing how it is done. The chapters range from *no experimental treatment* to *quasi-experimental* to *experimental* — distinctions that relate to the extent to which there were separate control and test groups in the various studies. It is worth noting that all of the studies took place in “actual” classrooms with “real” students. Therefore, while it is not usually possible to generalize from studies done with either no experimental or only quasi-experimental orientations, the value for students of SLA comes from seeing how these studies were designed by practicing teachers in natural teaching contexts.

Of the ten chapters in the volume, one of the most compelling for new teachers is Chapter 3, “Methodological Strengths, Challenges and Joys of Classroom-based Quasi-Experimental Research: Metacognitive Instruction and Corrective Feedback” by Masatoshi Sato and Shawn Loewen. In it, in addition to presenting a compelling study on the effectiveness of explicit corrective feedback instruction, the authors present a list of issues that can come up in conducting empirical classroom-based research (such as sudden class cancelations or participants dropping out in the middle of data collection) and ways to address them so as not to derail the study (p. 48). I found this list relevant and frank, as it shows readers new to empirical research that not everything goes smoothly, and even with some unexpected difficulties, when addressed appropriately, the research can continue.

The final chapter, “Discussion: Balancing Methodological Rigor and Pedagogical Relevance,” is a fantastic end to the volume because it is written by Nina Spada, co-author of what is one of the most widely used SLA textbooks around the world, *How Languages are Learned* (Lightbown & Spada, 2013). For SLA teachers who assign Spada’s book in class (like I do, just as it was assigned to me as a graduate student), it is fitting to see her discuss the applicability of ISLA to classroom pedagogy, as well as outline her thoughts on where the field is going, and elucidate upon what still needs to be done to more fully integrate SLA in teaching practices. Her key point is that while much of the classroom-based research presented in the book (and elsewhere) is not generalizable to other contexts, ISLA studies can still add to the body of research and understanding about how languages are learned. I would add that for practicing teachers, it is only their own context that matters anyway—which brings us to the point I want to make about action research.

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of this book is that, in addition to demonstrating the applicability of SLA research in teaching practices, it does so while presenting solid models of classroom-based action research. An important component of teacher-education programs is the practicum, which gives students real-world experience designing and implementing action research projects and reflecting upon their effectiveness. In Japan, where there are many graduate MA TESOL programs based on best practices in SLA (see Snyder, Hale, & Myskow, 2019), there is particular appeal for such a volume as it can accomplish twin goals of demonstrating the applicability of SLA theory in teaching practices, while also modeling replicable action research methodology in every chapter. As a teacher in an MA TESOL program, I can see the benefit of introducing this volume into our existing curriculum.

## References

- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The input hypothesis: Issues and implications*. Addison-Wesley Longman.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2012). Praxis and second language acquisition. In C. Chapelle (Ed.), *The encyclopedia of applied linguistics*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal0949>
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2013). *How languages are learned*. Oxford University Press.

- Snyder, W., Hale, C. C., & Myskow, G. (2020). An in-service TESOL practicum in Japan. In A. Ciroki, I. Madyarov, & L. Beacher (Eds.), *Current perspectives on the TESOL practicum: Cases from around the globe*. Springer. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-28756-6>
- Vandergrift, L. (1997). The comprehension strategies of second language (French) listeners: A descriptive study. *Foreign Language Annals*, 30(3), 387-409.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). Interaction between learning and development. *Readings on the Development of Children*, 23(3), 34-41.

***Research Methods for Complexity Theory in Applied Linguistics.***  
**Phil Hiver and Ali H. Al-Hoorie. Multilingual Matters, 2019. x + 286. e-book [https:// doi.org/ 10.21832/ HIVER5747](https://doi.org/10.21832/HIVER5747)**

*Reviewed by*  
Robert J. Kerrigan  
Shitennoji University

Very few people would claim that second language development is a simple process in which a finite number of variables can explain its development. Yet, many researchers tend to focus on a fixed set of variables to ascertain how we acquire an L2. Researchers interested in complex dynamic systems theory (CDST) try to address these concerns. It is best to perceive CDST as a *meta-theory* or “a set of coherent principles of reality (i.e., ontological ideas) and principles of knowing (i.e., epistemological ideas) that, for applied linguists, underpin and contextualize object theories (i.e., theories of language, language use and language development/learning) consistent with these principles” (Complexity Thinking to Complexity Theory section, para. 4). Complexity theory has been prevalent in other fields for decades, such as the physical and social sciences but is a relatively novel approach for conducting research in the field of applied linguistics. One of the reasons for this is the question of how to conduct research under a CDST paradigm (see Irie & Ryan, 2015). Phil Hiver and Ali Al-Hoorie not only provide a comprehensive overview of the theory, but more importantly, they provide applicable methodological approaches to conduct research in a CDST framework.

The book is divided into four sections. The first part presents an overview of CDST and how it fits in with current research paradigms. Chapter 1 is an

introduction to the book and details the format and purpose of the book. In Chapter 2, the authors delve into the roots of CDST and then go into intricate detail about its terminology, such as *attractor states* and *soft assembly*. The detailed explanations of these terms are informative but might require repeated readings until the concepts are fully understood. Fortunately, a glossary is included at the end of the book. The authors expand on the foundations of Chapter 2 and explicate how CDST aligns in current scientific philosophies in Chapter 3. The authors describe in detail how CDST can be implemented in either qualitative, quantitative, or both paradigms, adhering to the principles of critical realism (Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018). As CDST researchers question concepts, such as generalizability and causality, they assumedly adhere to postmodernist approaches to researching second language development. However, in this chapter, the authors provide convincing arguments that CDST philosophies do not reject science but aim to reform it.

Parts 2 and 3 compose the main sections of the book, as the authors explore the various analytical approaches to CDST. In Part 2, the authors provide a variety of qualitative approaches that complement CDST. Conversely, Part 3 covers quantitative approaches. These two parts follow a methodical structure, with a description of the analytical approach, the types of research questions that can be addressed using these analytical tools, its technical features, example studies that used said measures, and annotated readings for those interested in learning more about the methodology of the approaches.

Part 2 is comprised of seven chapters. In Chapter 4, the authors introduce qualitative comparative analysis: a seemingly paradoxical approach in which researchers strive to generalize their findings based on in-depth analysis of case studies and using Boolean analysis. Process tracing is the focus of Chapter 5, where the causal mechanisms of historic phenomena are explored at the individual level. Concept mapping is introduced in Chapter 6 in which mind maps are utilized to provide visual depictions of phenomena and their related parts. The authors describe agent-based modeling in Chapter 7—an approach in which modeling based on qualitative data collection is implemented to focus on the social and individual (hence *agent*) level of CDST. Retrodictive qualitative modeling is presented in Chapter 8. It is an analytical approach in which the projected trajectory of phenomena is predicted retroactively by tracing the significant variables and temporal changes that contributed to the formation of the phenomena. Social network analysis is the focus of Chapter 9, where the hierarchical and interconnected reality of social relationships are analyzed. In the final chapter in this section, design-based research methods are explicated—a research approach in which



contextual variables (e.g., pair and/or group dynamics, class dynamics, and institutional or regional dynamics) are paramount.

Part 3 (seven chapters) covers the quantitative approaches. The authors introduce panel designs in Chapter 11 in which information is collected from single cases over multiple data collection points to map the trajectory of phenomena. The authors delve into latent growth curve modeling in Chapter 12—a statistical approach that can track development at the group and individual level. In Chapter 13, the authors introduce multilevel modeling—a statistical regression model that takes hierarchical or nested data into account. In Chapter 14, time series analysis is described, which is similar to panel designs in that data is collected multiple times but involves different participants over a prolonged period. The experience sampling method is the subject of Chapter 15 and involves the use of purposive sampling and multiple data collection points to track the development of phenomena, usually behavioral or affective variables. Practitioners of single-case designs, the subject of Chapter 16, use methodologies in which treatments are alternatively applied to one or more groups over the course of the study to determine if the treatment is applicable to all participants. The idiodynamic method is the final statistical approach of Part 2 in which video software is implemented to capture the minute fluctuations of the participants' behaviors over a certain period, such as tracking physical instances of when a learner has anxiety during a speaking activity (e.g., biting their lip).

Readers might assume that mixed-methods (MM) approaches are the panacea for incorporating qualitative and quantitative methodologies to make studies representative of CDST principles. However, the authors take issue with this by concluding with an argument against the contemporary practices of MM designs in Part 4 and the final chapter of the book. Essentially, they assert that MM practices which emphasize one epistemological approach over another, such as sequential methods (QUAN→qual: Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018), do not adhere to CDST epistemological and ontological principles (i.e., critical realism). They state that current MM practices are incongruent, as they involve using diametrically opposed epistemological positions (i.e., objectivism vs. constructivism). However, they iterate that researchers who give qualitative and quantitative approaches equal prominence in their studies, such as convergent methods (QUAN + QUAL: Cresswell & Cresswell, 2018) are amenable to CDST principles.

Although the authors provide a multitude of pliable analytical approaches to CDST, the book is not without its limitations. One is the book's accessibility. Readers unfamiliar with CDST might find the first section particularly

daunting. Even the authors warn relatively uninitiated readers that the first section could be overwhelming. Readers new to CDST are advised to read Larsen-Freeman and Cameron (2008) or Larsen-Freeman (2015) for more accessible introductions to CDST. Furthermore, those who are unfamiliar with scientific philosophy will find this opening part esoteric. Most of Chapters 3 and 18 are concerned with ontological and epistemological philosophies of science and research, such as post-positivism, postmodernism, and critical realism, without any explanation as to what they entail. Another shortcoming of the book is the limited descriptions of the analytical approaches. Although the authors provide an informative overview of the approaches, how to conduct them remains aloof, as the authors do not explicate data collection procedures for all approaches. Additionally, the explanations of the example studies presented in each chapter in Parts 2 and 3 are very brief. The authors outline the purpose(s) of the study, its methodology, and the results. However, data collection and analytical procedures are not explained in detail—something which would be highly informative considering that this book is designed to illustrate how to conduct research using these approaches. Understandably however, the book is only an introduction to the approaches and is limited in its scope. The authors make up for this shortcoming by recommending other sources dedicated to said approaches.

Regardless of these shortcomings, this book will prove to be a useful resource for those intending to conduct research under a CDST paradigm. The authors provide a convincing argument to adhere to CDST principles when conducting research and the means to do so. This book will be invaluable to potential CDST researchers not only in the field of applied linguistics, but in other fields also.

## References

- Cresswell, J. W., & Cresswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.) Sage.
- Irie, K., & Ryan, S. (2015). Study abroad and the dynamics of change in learner L2 self-concept. In Z. Dörnyei, P. D. MacIntyre, & A. Henry (Eds.), *Motivational dynamics in language learning* (pp. 343-366). Multilingual Matters. <https://doi.org/10.21832/9781783092574-022>
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2015). Complexity theory. In B. VanPatten & J. Williams (Eds.), *Theories in second language acquisition: An introduction* (pp. 227-244). Routledge.
- Larsen-Freeman, D., & Cameron, L. (2008). *Complex systems and applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press.

***Language, Culture, and the Embodied Mind: A Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning.* Joseph Shaules. Springer Nature, 2019. vi + 228 pp. [https://doi.org/ 10.1007/978-981-15-0587-4](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-15-0587-4)**

*Reviewed by*

Eleanor Smith

Aichi University

The concept of language and culture interconnectedness in foreign language education is not new, yet in practice, language and culture are often regarded as separate entities. Language teachers frequently face the struggle of effectively implementing culture learning in the classroom, while adhering to curriculum demands that largely stipulate improving linguistic skills. This is the central ethos of *Language, Culture, and the Embodied Mind: A Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning*, which gives a detailed, accessible insight into language and culture learning both theoretically and practically. In three parts, Shaules provides a foundational analysis of the key concepts of the Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning (DMLL), explores the theoretical framework behind its inspiration, and considers the practical implications of the DMLL through personal teaching examples.

Part I “Background: Deep Learning, Language and Culture” consists of five chapters. The author provides a bird’s-eye view of the theoretical foundations for the DMLL, using experiential examples throughout that will resonate with foreign language teachers. To illustrate, Shaules contrasts the popular methods of simply explaining and demonstrating pronunciation to having learners experiment with sounds to increase familiarity and confidence. The necessity for “deep learning” (p. 11) is consistently reinforced, with its associated theories (namely, dynamic skills theory) presented in a succinct, commonsense manner.

Chapter 2 details the interdependent nature of language and culture, the concept of deep learning, and the dilemmas teachers face in attempting to include culture learning in the language classroom. Chapter 3 focuses on cultural learning goals. Shaules utilizes a neurocognitive perspective to demonstrate how deep culture embodies a wide range of elements of our psychological make-up. To illustrate, a substantial section describes how globalization has highlighted the cognitive struggles learners face when trying to transcend inherent cultural biases (that often form the core of

our identity) in order to fully understand and accept the diversity of ideas presented by another culture. Shaules concludes that all elements should be embraced when considering realistic approaches to establishing cultural learning goals. This perspective is convincingly rationalized through a comparison of contrasting theories in culture research from Edward T. Hall and Marshall McLuhan, both of whom recognized the potential for globalization to have on our psychology and the impact this could have on intercultural interactions, with Shaules aligning more with the former.

Chapter 4 introduces the concept and influence of “the intuitive mind” (p. 45), described as the unconscious cognitive processes that cumulatively influence our perceptions on a daily basis. The influence of our unconscious cognition in language and culture learning is a prominent theme throughout the book, used to demonstrate the frustrations and fears learners encounter and the conflict between conscious and unconscious motivation (echoing research by Brown, 2000; and Dörnyei, 1990). In Chapter 5, Shaules distinguishes implicit learning from deep learning. *JALT Journal* readers will identify with the plethora of examples provided to demonstrate why deep learning is pivotal in language and culture learning, as he illustrates how the attentive mind is often overloaded, while the intuitive mind is underserved.

In Chapter 6, Shaules investigates deep language and culture learning from a psychological perspective, proposing the unconventional yet commonsensical view that the psychological processes of language learning reflect those of cultural adaptation, illustrated through the types of demands being placed on the language learner. These demands are described as *adaptive* (referring to the psychological pressure learners experience) and *disruptive* (demands that diverge from the learner’s usual perceptions causing either avoidance of or “resistance” (p. 79) to change, or encouraging engagement and openness). Shaules argues that these demands are a fundamental, inescapable part of the learning process. Therefore, seemingly negative psychological responses (such as learner anxiety or avoidance techniques) should be viewed less as a disfunction and more of an inherent component of foreign language learning.

Part II “Theory: The Developmental Model of Linguaculture Learning” is a comprehensive literature review that conceptualizes and rationalizes the DMLL. The five chapters expand upon the model’s theoretical framework in much greater detail than is presented in Part I.

In Chapter 7, Shaules critically analyses established approaches to including culture in the language classroom, noting their “additive” tendency (p. 89) and the difficulties encountered putting them into practice while

acknowledging their substantial contribution to policy reform and teacher awareness. This chapter ends with a look at the influence of Dynamic Skills Theory in informing the DMLL. In Chapter 8, Shaules advocates for language teachers to familiarize themselves with emerging research into the relationship between culture and cognition and the role culture plays in developing one's identity at the unconscious level. The debate surrounding linguistic relativism (the connections between language, culture, perception, and thought) and the increasing acceptance of the term "linguaculture" (p. 113) is used to further highlight the enormous complexity of the bidirectional influence language and culture have on each other and on a learner's worldview.

Chapter 9 is of value to those interested in psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, Embodied Simulation Theory, and the Perky Effect. Though the whole book makes a compelling argument for language teachers to consider the deep connectivity between language and culture, this chapter leaves little doubt that linguaculture learning is essential, conceptualizing it in a "Linguaculture Tree" (Figure 9.1, p. 114).

Chapter 10 presents the DMLL in a logical, detailed manner, and in Chapter 11, Shaules rationalizes the intended use of the DMLL with language learners. Teachers of all language proficiency levels will no doubt relate to and find reassuring and inspiring the descriptions, explanations, and justifications of each stage of the DMLL (*encountering*, *experimenting*, *integrating*, and *bridging*). Concepts from beginner-learner resistance and naivete to the advanced-learner internal conflicts and demands of intercultural adaptation are covered and will resonate with those who have lived and taught for extended lengths in foreign communities. In Chapter 11, each stage of the DMLL is depicted in terms of linguacultural learning experiences that *JALT Journal* readers will identify with and find useful when helping students understand their language learning journey. For example, Shaules illustrates that in the *encountering* stage learners may feel excited (with new vocabulary or new sights) before feeling frustrated (perhaps perceiving forgetting a word as a failure, or finding people in the new culture to be rude). By the fourth stage, *bridging*, the learner may become the teacher, imparting their experiences to students yet also finding that their knowledge may now be so inherent that components of language or culture may be difficult to articulate.

Having established the model's applicability to language education from a theoretical perspective, Part III "Practice: A User's Guide to the DMLL" is likely where most educators interested in the model's practicality will be focused. Chapter 12 is optimal for busy teachers as it presents a list of FAQs

related to concepts covered in Parts I and II. The answers are brief yet sufficiently informative, redirecting the reader to the relevant chapter should they require further detail. In Chapter 13, Shaules uses personal teaching experiences to illustrate how to implement the DMLL, including specific situations from Japan. Each stage of the model is explained in terms of pedagogy, psychology, and the foreign language self. The chapter ends with sample activities showing students how to gauge their current level on the DMLL and how to proceed with their learning journey. Chapter 14, concerned with culture learning, is pertinent for those teaching study-abroad preparation and reflection courses, intercultural communication courses, and cultural studies. Shaules highlights the practical problems associated with teaching abstract concepts and provides examples of deep culture learning for each stage of the DMLL. The chapter contains sample materials that teachers, particularly at university-level, will find easily adaptable to their teaching situations. The book concludes with an extensive bibliography for further reading.

For those interested in incorporating culture in their language teaching, as well as those teaching culture-related courses, this book is a welcome addition to the teacher's bookshelf. Shaules has managed to take what many of us understand implicitly, yet struggle to articulate meaningfully in the classroom, and present it in a digestible, convincing, and replicable manner. This title is a must for anyone looking to deepen their knowledge in intercultural communication and foreign language teaching.

### References

- Brown, H. D. (2000). *Principles of language learning and teaching* (4th ed.). Addison Wesley Longman.
- Dörnyei, Z. (1990). Conceptualizing motivation in foreign language learning. *Language Learning*, 40(1), 46-78. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-1770.1990.tb00954.x>

***Rethinking TESOL in Diverse Global Settings: The Language and the Teacher in a Time of Change.* Tim Marr and Fiona English. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019. 529 pp. e-book**

*Reviewed by*

Chelanna White

Kyoto Prefectural Board of Education

Originally conceived as a pocket guide for first-time ELT teachers, this textbook became an impassioned call for ELT professionals to become not just experts in the art of teaching, but in the field of language itself. Teachers with many years of experience or strong backgrounds in linguistics are less likely to need convincing of the authors' repeated insistence on the importance of linguistics in the ELT field. As such, it would be a good choice for beginner TESOL courses, particularly those focused on linguistics or sociolinguistics. Marr and English suggest that this textbook be used in B.Ed. and MA programs, and shorter courses such as the CertTESOL. Assistant language teachers, volunteers in community language classes, and other paraprofessionals could also benefit from the constant encouragement for those in ELT to develop their linguistic understanding.

Throughout the book's 10 chapters, the authors come back to their three main points: (a) that an understanding of linguistics is essential in ELT, (b) that this is due to English's unique position as an international lingua franca, and finally, (c) that language teachers need not be native speakers (NSs) but must be language experts (1.4 para. 1). Each chapter concludes with a brief summary of two suggested readings for readers to expand their understanding of the chapter's theme. Chapters 2 through 9 also provide two task or discussion questions. Although each chapter could stand alone as an assigned reading for TESOL classroom discussion, the book is probably best taken as a whole. The repetition of the core themes and the way that chapters frequently refer to each other give the text a sense of cohesion.

Chapter 1 illuminates the core problem with the field of ELT, namely, too few teachers and administrators are aware of the need to be specialists in language itself. The "anyone can do it attitude" (1.2 para. 2) pervasive in ELT is portrayed as the main cause of this problem. The authors do not insist that every ELT professional obtain a degree in linguistics, but they argue that an understanding of English linguistics and sociolinguistics is essential for those teaching language. This chapter also provides an outline of the

chapters that follow and concludes by introducing the three main points mentioned above, that are explored and reiterated throughout the rest of the book.

In Chapter 2, English is contextualized as an international lingua franca, unique not for linguistic merits, but for its global reach and impact. The authors explore several narratives about English, from the “linguistic imperialism” (2.3 para. 1) perspective, to English as a key to success in international business, to English as a marker of social class. They argue that no other language has the reach of English, making it a truly global language with implications for ELT teachers. The authors break their three main points into five propositions (2.7 paras. 2-7) to be explored in more depth in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 outlines English as a lingua franca (ELF). Marr and English explain several competing ways the term lingua franca is used, from the original pidgin called lingua franca, to other pidgins, to natural languages used between nonnative speakers (NNSs), to a language of wider communication that may be the L1 of one speaker but not the other (see Brosch, 2015 for more information). They then explore how a lingua franca spreads and discuss the ongoing debate as to whether English even is a lingua franca (as the authors believe) and whether there is a power imbalance between its speakers.

Chapter 4 is about learner and stakeholder expectations of how English should be taught, and whether these expectations are in line with current teaching practices. Native-speakerism, that is, the belief that English belongs to NSs and they are best suited to teach the language to others, stands in contrast to the ELF model. The authors argue that a linguistically competent teacher, regardless of their L1, is best suited to manage the disconnect between stakeholder expectations and the realities of English outside of the classroom.

Chapter 5 focuses on ELT teachers and questions the dichotomy between NS and NNS teachers. From interviews with practicing ELT teachers, the authors discovered that many ELT teachers see themselves as experts in teaching, but not language itself. The authors present three areas of expertise that a good language teacher ought to have: use, pedagogy, and subject. Marr and English include a section on Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) “because it retains such a powerful position in the world of ELT” (5.4 para. 1). The chapter also gives examples of how a teacher’s lack of sociolinguistic understanding can cause frustration for students who may feel they are being held to arbitrary standards.



Chapter 6 provides a brief overview of phonetics, phonology, morphosyntax, semantics, and pragmatics, while acknowledging that these areas often blur together. All teachers are *noticers*, the authors claim, but linguistically informed ELT teachers can use their knowledge not simply to notice errors but to enhance lessons and deepen students' understanding.

In Chapter 7, Marr and English continue the focus on linguistics by looking at the bigger picture of language as communication. They provide a discourse analysis framework for analyzing communication inside and outside of the classroom. The authors also discuss the spoken-written continuum as a tool for understanding how written texts and spoken language "differ in terms of their production, the resources they make use of and the contexts in which they occur" (7.4 para. 1). For example, at one end are spoken texts, such as conversations in person between friends, and at the other are written texts, such as formal science textbooks. The authors give an example of a teacher insisting that students must speak in complete sentences, which is standard in formal written texts but not in everyday spoken ones, to demonstrate how misunderstanding the wider context of a text can lead to frustration, for learners and teachers alike.

In Chapter 8, the authors look at language learners and the "linguistic capital" (8.1 para. 2) they bring to the classroom. By understanding students' different linguistic backgrounds, teachers can play to the strengths of those backgrounds and validate learners' non-native English. Marr and English point to a project within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to localize ELT in the region as an example. They claim sociolinguistically-aware teachers are able to bring legitimacy to local cultures and transcultural communication in the classroom and shift the focus from replicating NS norms to producing intelligible and comprehensible language.

Chapter 9 is the most practical chapter, full of examples of ways to bring everyday language into the classroom. The authors introduce two ground rules: use language found in daily life and allow learners to use languages other than English for some activities. Rather than pushing any specific methodology, the authors offer three guiding principles to help teachers select which materials to use in the classroom: authenticity, validity, and relevance.

Chapter 10 provides a short summary of the points that have been reiterated throughout the text, where Marr and English implore teachers to not only become experts in language, but to embrace that identity. The unique status of English in the world requires new ways of thinking about how we teach it. Armed with knowledge of the English language and of teach-

ing, TESOL teachers can create challenging and engaging classrooms and produce learners who are more critically aware of the language they are learning.

*Rethinking TESOL in Diverse Global Settings* is an engaging introductory text for those involved, or about to be involved, in the ELT field. In it, the authors address many contemporary concerns of ELT professionals and propose that the keys to dealing with these challenges are to encourage teachers to learn linguistics, accept ELF, and embrace NNSs as experts.

### Reference

- Brosch, C. (2015). On the conceptual history of the term lingua franca. *Apples: Journal of Applied Language Studies*, 9(1), 71–85. <https://doi.org/10.17011/apples/2015090104>