

Reviews

Language Learning Motivation: An Ethical Agenda for Research.
Ema Ushioda. Oxford University Press, 2020. xi + 167 pp.

Reviewed by

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Author Ema Ushioda brings her considerable experience and depth of knowledge to bear in outlining a new ethical agenda for research into language learning motivation with this addition to the Oxford Applied Linguistics series. This new ethical agenda calls for those in the field to critically examine their motivations for conducting research and to re-think the objectives for the range of inquiries. Ushioda advocates for a shift away from an orientation to robust theoretical models and instead a move towards a more socially-conscious framework that is focused on providing benefit and agency to the communities and people who are being studied. She outlines the history of the field and the theoretical concept of the language learner before discussing the social contexts and ideologies that underpin language learning motivation studies. She continues to build the argument by citing anecdotal situations from her career and then presents the new agenda and concludes with a few suggestions for implementation.

Chapter 1 begins by making the case for the need to set a new ethical agenda in language learning motivation research in preparation for deeper discussions later in the work. Ushioda examines the need for a specific ethical agenda for language learning motivation studies and questions researchers' motivations for conducting such investigations. She goes on to address the question of "for what and for whom is our research?" by looking at both the psychological and pedagogical complexities of work in this area. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical complexities of language learning motivation studies and an overview of the structure of the remainder of the book.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the history of language learning motivation research. It begins with a description of the early focus on language learning and the language learner rather than language teaching and the language teacher. A discussion follows on whether the researchers' or the participants' needs are better served by this research. Next, Ushioda details the emergence of a more practitioner-validated model of research that appeared in the 1990s with an improved focus on the needs of language teachers. Finally, the chapter contains a description of the latest developments in language learning motivation research in the era of global English.

In Chapter 3, the discussion turns to the evolution of the theoretical concept of the language learner. The starting point of this evolution is characterized as a learner of a second language in a bilingual environment. Over time the conception changes into the learner as a learner of a foreign language in an institutionalized classroom. The progression continues and comes to encompass the language learner as a learner of English as a globally important language and finally, to a learner of languages other than English as a personal choice. Additionally, the theorization of motivation as a separate construct, the ethical issues associated with such a viewpoint, and the deficiencies of viewing motivation in isolation are also covered.

Chapter 4 continues the discussion of the history and development of language learning motivation studies by shifting the focus to the contexts in which the research has historically been carried out. Specifically highlighted, is the dominance of English language classrooms in research in recent years as privileging the learning of English over other contexts and other forms of multilingualism. Apart from what language is being learned, it is also argued that L2 classrooms are favored as a setting, and thus disfavor other settings in which language learning occurs. The chapter concludes with Ushioda arguing that by favoring the aforementioned contexts in which research has been conducted, an elitist bias has pervaded the practice of investigating language learning motivation throughout its history.

Chapter 5 in turn illustrates the ideologies and social forces that shape the environment of the language classroom. In particular, the ethical and moral implications of the use of motivational strategies in the classroom are discussed. Ushioda asserts that the use of motivational strategies such as personalization, ideation of an L2 self, and the use of L2 near-peer role models puts the control over students' motivation in the hands of the teacher. She then suggests this could lead the learners to become dependent on the teacher for sources of motivation. The chapter summary states that as teachers we must be careful not to decontextualize research findings and

appropriate them into motivational techniques to be used in the classroom because of the ethical and moral complexities of doing so.

Chapter 6 highlights the relational and ethical complexities and difficulties that researchers face when investigating language learning motivation. The discussion centers around the tension between the concepts of procedural ethics and ethics in practice and the potentially transformative effects that research can have on the participants' motivation. At the end of the chapter, Ushioda reminds us that any ethical agenda for research must call for a critical analysis of the relationships between the researcher and research subjects before, during, and after the research project is concluded.

In Chapter 7, the new ethical framework for language learning motivation research is outlined in detail. Ushioda argues that an ethical shift has already occurred in the larger ethical context of research, that being away from an emphasis on personal autonomy towards a greater emphasis on engaging in collective sociopolitical action. She proposes that a similar shift should happen in the field of language learning motivation. Ushioda advocates that research should be guided by philosophical pragmatism and should be value driven, not purpose driven. Finally, she argues that the underlying claims on the neutrality of practical utilitarianism amount to an implicit adoption of an ends justify the means mentality and must be rejected.

In Chapter 8, Ushioda proceeds to discuss and illustrate a framework for applying the new ethical agenda that has been introduced in the previous chapters. The discussion begins by showing how to frame inquiry in the field in a socially responsive way. Ushioda also looks at the value of teacher-researcher collaborations and teacher-led research. Additionally, a section is devoted to drawing a distinction between investigating and influencing student motivation during research procedures. Next, there is attention given to the challenges of reorienting the field to better serve marginalized and underserved groups. The chapter wraps up with a note on possible forms of ethical training and awareness for language learning motivation researchers.

As this volume primarily concerns itself with an ethical agenda tailored to the needs of the language learning motivation research community, it will primarily be of interest to researchers of motivation in language learning. However, the title of the book may mislead readers on the primary theme of the work. It is not a book about the fundamentals of language learner motivation or a complete history of the previous research conducted in the field, though some attention is given to these topics. This is a book about critical language theory, or critical theory more broadly, and the author's views on

how these should be applied to language learning motivation studies.

Despite this, language teaching practitioners may also be interested in parts of the discussion pertaining to classroom practices surrounding student motivation. Personally, I found the issues around the ethical and moral implications of the use of motivational strategies in the classroom in Chapter 5 (p. 68) to be very insightful, and other teachers and language educators may as well.

***Social Networks in Language Learning and Language Teaching.* Avary Carhill-Poza and Naomi Kurata (Eds.). Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020. ix + 256 pp. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350114289>**

Reviewed by

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This volume brings together nine studies which address the role of social networks in language learning and teaching. As the editors describe in the first chapter, “Social Network Analysis and its Application in Applied Linguistics,” the studies take a primarily sociocultural or ecological approach, seeing L2 learning as “constructed in and through interaction in situated activities” (p. 5). Although social network analysis originated as a quantitative method, the chapters draw on qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches to consider how language learners’ social relationships provide opportunities for language learning and identity development. In addition to illuminating how social relationships shape language learning, most chapters include insightful and innovative pedagogical recommendations.

The volume is divided into three sections, with the first part titled “Immigrant Children and Adolescents’ Social Networks in School Settings.” Two chapters address the classroom networks of immigrant language learners in the United States. In Avary Carhill-Poza’s chapter, “The Social Networks of Adolescent Emergent Bilinguals in High School,” she found that higher academic L2-English proficiency was correlated with networks comprised of many bilingual Spanish-English speaking peers. However, Spanish-English bilingual practices were actively discouraged by classroom teachers. In their chapter “Social Networks and Patterns of Participation in Linguistically

Heterogeneous Classrooms,” Amanda Kibler and her co-authors consider degrees of *linguistic integration* in multilingual classrooms, or the extent to which speakers of different L1s interact with each other. They found that active and confident participation was associated with high-integration classrooms. Pedagogical recommendations include increased training of teachers in awareness of the peer relationships, and classroom activities such as peer learning. In the third chapter, Kaya Oriyama’s “Social Networks with Purpose: Heritage Language Networks of Practice Among Transnational and Transcultural Japanese Youth in Sydney,” she investigated the networks and identities of Japanese youth in families which have relocated overseas for work. She found that institutional heritage language support such as Japanese language tutoring was crucial for maintaining language proficiency. She also demonstrated how the identities of these youth, moving between Japan, Australia, and other contexts, were not fixed but *transcultural*, existing on a continuum and highly context/network specific.

As the editors observe, there is a lack of research on social networks in home country language learning contexts, such as English learning in Japan. Despite this, fully one third of the volume is dedicated to such contexts, with Part II titled “Out-of-Class Social Networks of University Students in Home-Country Settings.” The studies demonstrate that existing networks of ties to peers, family members, and others provide opportunities for language learning and motivation outside of the classroom contexts. In her four-year case study, “The Effects of Social Networks on L2 Experiences and Motivation: A Longitudinal Case Study of a University Student of Japanese in Australia,” Naomi Kurata investigated networks and L2 motivation. The learner’s motivation became increasingly integrative as she took part in festivals and cultural events, sought out ties to Japanese study abroad students, and finally developed ties to the Japanese community in Australia partly through her Japanese boyfriend. Kurata argues for greater awareness among teachers about the potential of network opportunities outside the classroom. In “Changing Informal Language Learning Networks in a Gulf Arab Community,” David Palfreyman used quantitative methods to compare social network surveys of female Emirati students conducted in 2003 and 2018. He reveals how family relationships provided opportunities for English learning but suggests that societal changes in the UAE led learners to rely less on brothers and husbands and more on sisters and online sources for English support. In “How Do Social Networks Facilitate Out-of-class L2 Learning Activities?,” Miho Inaba mapped the networks of learners of Japanese in Australia and Sweden through qualitative interviews and diary entries. Despite some ties

to L1 Japanese speaking acquaintances, interactions with classmates who held similar interests (e.g., anime) had a greater impact on the participants' language learning activities and motivation outside the classroom.

The final section is entitled "Social Networks in Study Abroad Contexts." Hannah Trimble-Brown and co-authors' chapter, "Implementing Mental Contrasting to Improve English Language Learning Social Networks" considers how social networks during study abroad are affected by classroom training in a self-regulation strategy. Their findings suggest that, at the start of a SA program, training students to visualize goals for L2 social interaction can encourage the formation of larger and denser social networks. The most comprehensive study in scope is "Developing Friendships or Practicing Japanese?: Differential Impacts of Language Pledge on Study Abroad Students." Atsushi Hasegawa maps the networks of Japanese learners in Japan to consider whether the program's "Japanese only" pledge and system of placing international students with Japanese roommates facilitated networks for L2 usage. He concludes that networks are more likely to develop when fewer constraints are placed on learners, encouraging translingual Japanese-English interactions and social ties which do not conform to host/guest or learner/supporter binaries. Perhaps the most interesting study from a Japanese perspective is Levi Durbridge's chapter, "Social Network Development and Language Learning in Multilingual Study Abroad Contexts: Case Studies of Japanese Adolescents." Drawn from a pool of 100 survey respondents, he investigated four Japanese learners taking part in a high school exchange program in non-English majority countries (e.g., Brazil, Finland). While the students' proficiency in the majority language did shape their social networks, key individuals (host siblings, schoolmates with an interest in Japanese pop culture) were important in facilitating interactions and social ties in the host community. He argues for greater attention in pre-departure language programs to necessary practical communication skills.

As the editors state in their "Concluding Discussion," the studies in this volume demonstrate that "social networks that support language learning do not occur easily or incidentally" (p. 238). Learners' agency to form and leverage networks is necessarily constrained by learning context, resources available, language proficiency, and positioning as "non-native speaker", among other aspects. However, the editors emphasize that language teachers have a role: teachers may raise awareness of the potential of varied networks beyond the "native-speaking friend myth" (p. 238) or arrange activities, mentoring opportunities, and online learning communities. In particular, teachers can help learners set realistic expectations for networks both overseas and in their home countries.

As well as the importance of social networks in language learning and teaching, the chapters in this volume showcase the wide diversity of approaches to networks in research. At times, this diversity is warranted, as different contexts, timeframes, and phenomena necessitate different networks. However, as someone using social networks in my own research, I would argue for greater consistency in how networks are represented in future research. While many studies in the volume draw on related frameworks, no two studies represent networks in the same way, and indeed many authors choose not to represent networks visually at all. In future studies, greater use of existing and established frameworks (e.g., *individual networks of practice* [Zappa-Hollman & Duff, 2015], *classroom networks of practice* [Bernstein, 2018]) would benefit readers who are less familiar with social network analysis and aid in comparison across contexts.

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***Political Economy and Sociolinguistics: Neoliberalism, Inequality, and Social Class.* David Block. Bloomsbury, 2018. xiii + 227 pp. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781474281478.ch-004>**

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Professor David Block has been contributing highly influential work to the fields of sociolinguistics, second language acquisition (SLA), and applied linguistics for more than three decades. Block's (2003) work, for example, *The Social Turn in Second Language Acquisition*, is considered groundbreaking by many for its insistence that SLA researchers incorporate wider social considerations into accounts of language learning. Similarly, his *Social Class*

in *Applied Linguistics* (2014) was also influential in that it helped flag the previously under-researched construct of social class as an area worthy of greater attention from applied linguists. So too it is with this work, *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics*, where Block laments “the seeming unwillingness of far too many researchers to situate political economy in general, and social class in particular as central to their efforts” (p. 5). Block plants a flag in the introduction, stating that the book, for some, “will be a case of taking the social science angle to the extreme” (p. ix). The central argument of this work is that Marxist political economy provides sociolinguists with a superior alternative to more conventional post-structuralist critiques of a modern, unjust, neoliberal world. The Marxist influenced Block is unapologetically vociferous in this view when he declares “one does not take a water pistol to combat a housefire and so one cannot take on ... predatory capitalism...with actions that are merely palliative” (pp. 46-47).

Structurally, this book strikes a balance between on the one hand, chapters that can be described as theoretical, and on the other, examples of detailed practical applications of this theory in real world sociolinguistic inquiry. For instance, Block provides accessible yet comprehensive theoretical explanations of political economy (Chapter 2), neoliberalism (Chapter 3), and social class (Chapter 4) before moving on to discussions of the neoliberal citizen (Chapter 5), and discursive class warfare as seen through representations of housing evictions occurring across Spain over the last decade.

Chapter 1 is titled “A Short History of Political Economy in Sociolinguistics.” Here, Block makes reference to the pioneering work of Judith Irvine and Susan Gal. While sociolinguists have generally been slow to incorporate political economy into their writing, Block offers an initial summary of the political economy literature as it relates specifically to sociolinguistics. He categorizes this work as having engaged with one of five key strands: (1) the English Divide and how access to English language learning is intertwined with class position; (2) the commodification of language in the workplace; (3) the economics of language based on the classic notion of “optimal resource allocation” (p. 17); (4) language and tourism; and (5) Critical Discourse Studies/Analysis which examines the way language discursively constructs ideology and “takes on issues of inequality” (p. 24).

Then, in Chapter 2, “Political Economy: Background and Approach,” Block takes a much deeper dive into the ever-evolving history of political economy, which he defines, in the widest sense, as “the science of the laws governing the production and exchange of the material means of subsistence in human society” (p. 32). Block discusses the relationship between humanism and

political economy, and introduces the reader to Global Political Economy (GPE) and International Political Economy (IPE) – both of which having emerged “as loosely organized fields of inquiry at the confluence of economics and developmental studies from the 1970s onwards” (p. 42). Finally, in this theoretically dense chapter, Block considers how sociolinguists working within a political economy framework should think about ontological (reality) and epistemological (knowledge) considerations.

“Neoliberalism: Historical and Conceptual Considerations” is the title of Chapter 3. Here, Block points out that the term neoliberalism, as the latest incarnation of a particularly pernicious, predatory capitalism, has become a “default epithet for all things that are despised as unjust” (p. 51). Neoliberalism is shown to have emerged in two stages, the first being a “roll-back stage” that saw the obliteration of the Keynesian welfare state, followed by the “roll-out stage” with the privatization of public assets and the heralding in of low-cost, non-state, service providers (pp. 53-54). A detailed account of the most influential neoliberal thinkers is provided in this chapter. Block argues that the media has been complicit in convincing the public that neoliberalism is somehow “commonsensical” (p. 56) and that this has resulted in dramatic changes to our social institutions. Schools now compete for clients, not students, for example, and domestic labour markets have suffered from first the “out-sourcing” and, later, “off-shorization” of jobs (pp. 72-74).

In Chapter 4, “Stratification, Inequality, and Social Class,” some of the unsavory byproducts of neoliberalism are examined. The stratification that Block describes is a term that captures “how societies are based on different forms of differentiation” (p. 102). As with the previous chapters, Block offers a chronological perspective on our emerging understanding of social class, providing the reader with a comprehensive and contrastive panoramic survey of the major theorists, which, despite the aforementioned warning about “taking the social science angle to the extreme”, will prove, for some, rather dense ground.

Chapter 5, “The Neoliberal Citizen: Conceptualizations and Contexts,” is where the theoretical rubber starts to meet the sociolinguistic road. Here, Block is dealing with the “human consequences” (p. 103) of neoliberalism, namely the promulgation of the “neoliberal citizen” – the individualistic, self-branded, self-sufficient entrepreneur whose “political and social rights and duties revolve around a conformity with the ‘choices’ that neoliberal regimes offer – increasing precaritized jobs, flexibility imposed from above, being a good consumer to keep the economy growing, voting in elections for marketized candidates and so on” (p. 104). Block offers an interesting analy-

sis of the neoliberal citizen as represented by the characters in a French as a foreign language textbook. Also in this chapter is a discursive analysis of the 2013 Spanish law supporting entrepreneurs and a call for proposals for funding grants to show just how deeply “discourses of competitiveness and entrepreneurialism have extended into realms where they would likely not have been welcome or accepted in the past” (p. 125).

The sixth and final chapter is titled “Inequality, Class and Class Warfare: Discourse, Ideology, and Truth.” Block focusses primarily on the way various stakeholders (e.g., home owners, bankers, politicians) discursively represent the increasing practice of evicting defaulting Spanish mortgagees from their homes. Drawing from Critical Discourse Studies on the notion of semiosis (i.e., the making of meaning using semiotic resources) (p. 141), and the idea of “classtalk” (Turgeon et al., 2014), Block shows how “public policy talk and the media (specifically reality shows) construct class, class relations and class warfare” (p. 143). Block also introduces us to the notion of corrupt discourses, which involve the deliberate misuse of language to win symbolic battles (pp. 157-163), and the emerging dangers for both society and democracy in a “post-truth” era (pp. 163-164).

Regardless of one’s politics, readers will find David Block’s *Political Economy and Sociolinguistics* a thought-provoking, impeccably-researched, and skillfully written book. Block knowledgeably guides his reader through what for some will be unfamiliar and rugged terrain, but the reward will certainly be worth the effort. Block’s colleague and sometimes co-author John Gray is reported in the Epilogue to have remarked that what Block “has tried to do here is recalibrate sociolinguistics in the direction of a more thoroughgoing sociological orientation” (p. 169). Without a doubt, David Block has succeeded.

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JALT Journal is a bi-annual, Scopus-approved research journal of the Japan Association for Language Teaching (全国語学教育学会). JALT's larger mission is to support the research programs and professional development of JALT members, promote excellence in language learning, teaching, and research, and provide opportunities for those involved in language education. In line with this mission, *JALT Journal* publishes high-quality English- and Japanese-language, quantitative and qualitative, theoretically-informed and empirically-grounded studies of relevance to second/foreign language education in Japan. Although emphasis is placed on the Japanese context, *JALT Journal* values contributions which also transcend geographical boundaries to illuminate the complex interaction between language, language use, people, education, and society across cultural and socio-political contexts.

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- Language acquisition/learning
- Language policy and planning
- Language testing/evaluation
- Phonetics
- Pragmatics
- Psycholinguistics
- Semantics
- Sociolinguistics
- Syntax
- Teacher training
- Translation and interpretation
- Vocabulary

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