

Reviews

***Dominant Language Constellations: A New Perspective on Multilingualism.* Joseph Lo Bianco and Larissa Aronin (Eds). Springer Nature, 2020. xix + 282 pp. ¥12,154.
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Reviewed by

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Dominant Language Constellations: A New Perspective on Multilingualism (Volume 47 of Educational Linguistics series), edited by Joseph Lo Bianco and Larissa Aronin, offers an innovative conceptual shift in how multilingualism is studied and understood. Positioned at the intersection of applied linguistics, sociolinguistics, and language policy, this edited volume introduces the Dominant Language Constellations (DLCs) framework as a novel lens to scrutinise how individuals and societies manage multiple languages in increasingly complex linguistic milieus. The volume is timely in essentially rethinking and reimagining the notions of linguistic dominance and suppression, given the fluidity of language practices in today's superdiverse world.

The targeted audience is scholars, graduate students, language educators, and policymakers interested in multilingualism, language planning, and education. The book's theoretical richness and practical significance make it a valuable source for researchers and practitioners navigating linguistically diverse classrooms, institutions and other contexts. Contesting the traditional static models of multilingualism, the volume's novel conceptual framework—DLC—offers a flexible and context-sensitive framework, enabling more accurate reflections/analysis of the lived linguistic experiences of individuals and communities. The volume, by combining theoretical grounding in empirical studies in each chapter,

makes the theoretically loaded DLC framework easily understandable and usable. The DLC framework claims that multilingualism be considered not as an undistinguishable set of linguistic resources (as translanguaging theoretical underpinnings see) but as a constellation of languages within which dominance of languages and their usage shift, shaped by contextual linguistic circumstances. Unlike linguistic resources of multilinguals as a unified system as translanguaging postulates, DLC is underpinned by how certain languages emerge as more expedient or dominant in specific contexts but not in others due to sociopolitical, economic, cultural, or communicative factors, as the volume illustrates with empirical studies.

Framed by a convincing introduction and a forward-looking concluding chapter, the volume is well-structured into three main parts. Part I—“Current Development of DLC,” comprises five chapters and mainly lays the theoretical groundwork. Grounded in Complexity Theory, Aronin’s opening chapter positions DLC as an analytical approach, emphasizing the contextuality and adaptability of multilingual practices. Lo Bianco then connects DLC with language policy and political oversight, taking Vietnam as his “case.” He argues for ethically grounded policies aligning with actual linguistic realities. Adding a cognitive dimension to the volume, next, Fernández-Berkes and Flynn investigate multilingual learners’ use of dominant languages during their simultaneous multilingual language acquisition, focusing on learners’ syntactic development. Felix Banda’s African case study outlines the sociopolitical layers of DLCs in Zambia’s multilingual landscape, reinforcing the dynamic, multi-layered nature of language dominance resulting from years of trans-regional, transnational migration, and interethnic contact.

Part II, “Institutional Expression of DLC,” presents empirical cases from educational contexts. In the first chapter of this part, Björklund et al. discover societal and individual DLCs in Finland. They focus on language immersion and policy tensions. In the succeeding chapter, Nikolay Slavkov presents language background profiling in elementary schools in Canada. This is another chapter that displays DLC’s relevance in language planning for multilingual classrooms. In the last chapter of Part II, Coetzee-Van Rooy investigates multilingual South African students’ repertoires and shows a clear complementary relationship between language repertoire and DLC.

Part III, “Personal and Group Experiences with DLC,” delves into micro-level realities. Sarari Kannangara analyses how her unique personal DLCs evolve through language use on a par with personal, societal, and geographical shifts, highlighting emotional and strategic decision-making in

language choice. In the succeeding chapter, Sviatlana Karpava investigates Russian speakers in Cyprus, examining how intergenerational language maintenance intersects with societal integration. Next, Stella Krevelj studies crosslinguistic influence in multilinguals through DLC and confirms DLC as a productive lens for analysing transfer in multilingual speech. Adding an affective dimension, Richard Nightingale explores emotional attachment to languages through a case study in Spain, in the following chapter. He suggests that DLC configuration seems dynamic and constantly in flux as conditions evolve in multilingual contexts.

The final chapter by Lo Bianco, “Quo Vadis, DLC?” (From here, where are we going?), reviews key insights from the preceding chapters. He raises critical questions about the future of language policy, linguistic diversity and justice, and the survival of less powerful/minority languages in the face of neo-globalisation and technological progression. He emphasises the role of DLCs in addressing global and local language dynamics while underscoring the role of education and media in shaping attitudes towards practical language use and linguistic hierarchies.

As evident above, the DLC framework is theorised and empirically applied across geographical, institutional, and individual contexts, enhancing its versatility and relevance throughout the volume. One of the most commendable aspects of this book is its innovative, ground-breaking theoretical framing—DLC. It transcends traditional dichotomies such as native vs. non-native language or L1 vs. L2 and recent theoretical concepts such as translanguaging by situating languages and language use in a dynamic constellation that varies across time, space, and purpose. Aronin’s theoretical articulation of DLC as “the most expedient languages for a person” (p. 19), rooted in context-sensitive analysis effectively addresses real-life complexities in multilingual milieus. Another strength is the volume’s interdisciplinary scope. While the overarching framework is sociolinguistic, the chapters draw from cognitive linguistics (such as syntax development), educational policy, affective studies, and migration research, making the book accessible to readers from several academic/professional backgrounds. Moreover, the intermingling of qualitative and quantitative methodologies across chapters adds a robust and nuanced understanding of the DLC framework’s applicability.

The writing style across the volume is academic but lucid. Most chapters are easily comprehensible for graduate-level students and early-career researchers. However, certain theoretical sections that engage heavily with theory (e.g., Complexity Theory) might be challenging to readers new to

sociolinguistics. Aside from this, the introductory chapter does an excellent job of scaffolding key concepts, and the Foreword by Li Wei provides a concise but powerful contextualisation of the book's contribution to the field. Another noteworthy strength is the global coverage, from Africa and Europe to North America and South Asia, grounding the theoretical insights in lived linguistic realities. The African and Cypriot chapters are particularly effective in illustrating how DLCs operate in multilingual but power-stratified, multi-tiered multilingual environments. The chapters that present cases from Canada and Finland also offer lessons for educational policy, linguistic inclusion, and equity.

There are a few areas that could have been reinforced in the volume. First, the emphasis on fluidity is much foregrounded and this occasionally tends to downplay the structural inequalities that shape language use, though the contributors have explicitly acknowledged linguistic hierarchies. In many multilingual societies, specific languages are afforded higher status and prestige, influencing individuals to make conscious linguistic choices and position such languages within a DLC. For instance, the English language in postcolonial settings perpetuates dominance. These power dynamics are durable, yet fluctuate, intersecting with sociopolitical, cultural, etc., circumstances. Hence, a much deeper engagement with critical theories of language and colonialism would have enriched the analysis. Another limitation is the predominance of qualitative data. Undeniably, the depth and contextual richness of the qualitative case studies are rich and nuanced. Hitherto, integrating large-scale quantitative findings could have strengthened the volume. However, the authors take more or less a qualitative orientation to cater to their aim, i.e., to capture a panoramic view of deep complexities in individual and societal multilingual practices. Such practices are not easily reducible to numerical trends.

Irrespective of these negligible issues, the volume is a notable contribution to sociolinguistics, particularly the multilingualism research arena. The volume succeeds in its primary objective: introducing and operationalising a novel framework for understanding complex and dynamic multilingualism in the century where linguistic boundaries are increasingly fluid and permeable. The DLC model will have far-reaching implications for educational research, curriculum design, teacher training, and language policy. In this regard, the volume offers a diagnostic and strategic tool for policymakers and grassroots practitioners aiming to create linguistically inclusive and just landscapes.

Dominant Language Constellations: A New Perspective on Multilingualism is a stimulating and timely addition to contemporary multilingualism studies. It offers a new conceptual vocabulary and an empirically grounded framework that better mirrors how individuals use and experience multiple languages in navigating today's globalised contexts. The model challenges monolingual paradigms and presents a practical and theoretically sound dynamic view of multilingualism.

The volume's breadth spans from syntax acquisition to language policy and emotional dimensions, ensuring a diverse readership across academia and practice. It is highly recommended for applied linguists, language teachers, educational policymakers, and undergraduate/graduate students navigating multilingual realities in classrooms, institutions, individuals, communities, and research. Those interested in translanguaging, linguistic justice/democracy, or language planning and policy will find the DLC framework a novel and stimulating alternative that complements and extends current debates of multilingualism. By combining critical insight, empirical grounding, and theoretical innovation, the book opens new directions for research and pedagogy in multilingualism. "With its emphasis on the dynamic and ever-changing nature of multilingualism and the need to embed our analysis and understanding in historical and ideological contexts, DLC makes an original and productive contribution to scholarship and knowledge" (p. ix) as the eminent sociolinguist Li Wei (2020) suggested in her foreword to the volume.

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***Plurilingual Education in a Monolingualised Nation: Exploring New Frontiers in Language Teaching in Japan.* Daniel Ray Pearce. Multilingual Matters, 2025. xii + 230 pp.
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In this monograph, Daniel Ray Pearce provides a detailed account of plurilingual practices in the “ostensibly monolingual contexts” (p. 3) of Japanese elementary schools. Plurilingualism is defined as a complex composite of competencies in languages in which speakers have varying degrees of communicative proficiency (Coste et al., 2009), but has been seen as a “minority issue” (p. 2) in Japan, where the “double monolingualism/二重のモノリンガリズム” (Miura, 2000, p. 9) of Japanese as the language of domestic communication and English as the sole foreign language for schooling and international communication has dominated post-World War II.

Part One provides the academic background for Pearce’s study into plurilingualism and Pearce’s autoethnographic situation. Part Two examines the plurilingual approaches of Japanese teachers of English (JTEs) in primary schools. Part Three looks at the previously ignored plurilingual potential of the elementary school Assistant Language Teachers (ALTs), which are now present throughout Japan and are still treated as “native English speakers” by policy despite present realities. It closes with a discussion of the preceding chapters that presents suggestions for teacher training.

Chapter 1 begins with a history of language teaching in Japan. Of particular note is its discussion of how the dominance of *yakudoku*, or translation reading, remained unquestioned until the 1970s, relating this to the rise of cognitive-linguistic theories which postulated native speaker status as the ultimate goal of language acquisition. Citing May (2014), Pearce describes this as the origin of the “monolingual bias,” or “language-as-model,” that sees bi/multilingualism as an “aberration” from an idealized native speaker norm. This norm was embodied by the communicative turn in national education policy and subsequent introduction of ALTs from the 1980s. Pearce then contrasts these “language-as-model” approaches with the subsequent development of sociocultural approaches, dubbed “user-as-

model,” which were critical of prior native speaker idealizations (e.g. Firth & Wagner, 1997) and valorized instead how bi/multilinguals actually develop and use their named languages in practice, for instance as shown by François Grosjean (e.g., 2010).

Chapter 2 describes the emic method of multimodal polyethnography (Olt & Teman, 2019) used in this study, which focuses on individuals’ plurilingual experience, and profiles the main participants. Of note is its methodological presentation of both participants’ and the author’s *currere*, in which “each person’s current skills, abilities and beliefs are a result of a life history which has served as a form of ‘curriculum’ during their development” (Lawrence & Lowe, 2020, p. 9). Through incorporating visual linguistic biography (e.g. Melo-Pfeifer & Chik, 2020), Pearce includes visual data beyond written or spoken language to extend what is expressible.

Chapter 3 relates the study to the author’s visual linguistic autobiography. Pearce relates in words and images his childhood struggles with belonging, finding himself on the autistic spectrum, and discovering Japanese and linguistics in university as together creating the foundation for his adult plurilingual success. Pearce has defined his teaching career in Japan outside of the double monolingualisms of both Japanese and English language native speakerism, and how as a licensed secondary school teacher who earned his graduate degrees in Japan and is now a teacher trainer, he has worked to develop plurilingual pedagogy.

Chapter 4 profiles the plurilingual pedagogic practices of two elementary school JTEs that embody an Awakening to Languages approach (see Oyama and Pearce, 2019). Yuki-sensei became an elementary school English teacher when foreign languages activities (外国語活動) were added to the official curriculum from 2011, while Kana-sensei is a self-identified “monolingual” Japanese elementary *Kokugo* (国語: subject Japanese) teacher who started teaching foreign language activities classes when they were implemented at her school. Yuki-sensei’s vignettes in Chapter 4 illustrate her appreciation for multitudinous cultural and linguistic backgrounds. Chapter 5 shows how Yuki-sensei enacts plurilingualism in her classroom so that foreign languages are personally relevant for students, for instance demonstrating to her third-year elementary students, who are concurrently learning *romaji* in their *Kokugo* classes and Roman characters in their English classes, how *romaji* and English are different and why that might be using signs from the students’ local linguistic environment. Chapter 6 profiles Kana-sensei and her school’s *Gengo Bunka* (language and culture) curriculum. Kana-sensei’s vignettes show how she became a

critically engaged educator who had initially resisted the introduction of foreign languages into elementary schools. Chapter 7 profiles the intersection of the *Gengo Bunka* curriculum with peace education in Kana-sensei's school, such as having students examine a 10-rupee banknote from India, and hypothesize why there were so many languages, as well as which were most prominent. Both Yuki-sensei and Kana-sensei's classrooms feature activities that foster a multisensory sensitivity towards the phonemic differences between languages.

Part 3 begins with Chapter 8, which outlines the history of the JET/ALT system, and reports on a demographic survey of 181 ALT participants' plurilinguistic repertoires (p. 153), following Pearce (2021), that alone is a necessary reference. It also shows ALTs and JTEs collaboratively working to introduce plurilingual content within and beyond the textbook despite the constraints of insufficient teacher training, overly superficial materials, and unstable ALT employment. In Chapter 9, Pearce examines the "individual plurilingualism" of Japanese teachers and their ALT teaching partners. He suggests using visual linguistic biographies to enable ALTs to quickly present their plurilingualism to busy JTE partners so they can properly use ALTs' plurilingual capacities. Pearce then conducted a linguistic ethnography with his fourth-year student, Airi-sensei, first hearing her impressions of ALTs both as a student and a future teacher. Her visual linguistic ethnography was then sent to a former ALT, Nick-sensei, who shared his own. Through their online collaborative exploration of each other's linguistic backgrounds, Airi-sensei, as a future teacher, became more aware of ALTs' potential plurilinguistic abilities.

In the conclusion, Pearce reminds us that the plurilingualism presented by Yuki-sensei and Kana-sensei is a counter-discourse to the dominant double monolingualism he asserts results from following official Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT) policy that officially promotes an English-exclusive environment from upper elementary school. While this counter-discourse opposes macro-level policy, it is in cooperation with meso-level school policy. Finally, while acknowledging that there is justification for giving English priority in Japanese foreign language education, Pearce asserts that since the majority of English speakers in the world are not native speakers themselves, a plurilingual approach is more relevant for awakening students to different ways of knowing the world.

This volume has three strengths. The most prominent to this reader is in its methodological richness. A plus of Pearce's plurilingual approach

is that he actively brings readers into dialogue with literature across languages and thus embodies in his scholarship the practice he advocates. Additionally, readers familiar with duoethnography, which has previously gained some popularity in language teaching research, may find Pearce's polyethnography an intriguing innovation. His practice of visual linguistic biography as a research method should inspire more readers to consider extra-linguistic modes in their ethnographic research, though I believe the specific methods do require refinement as will be discussed. Finally, as a practical introduction to plurilingualism in classroom practice in Japan, Yuki-sensei's vignette, and the presentation of the hidden plurilingualism of ALTs and discussion of its potential despite official sanction, is particularly welcome.

On a critical note, however, the following points stand out. First, this volume may have been better entitled "plurilingualism in Japanese elementary school education". Although both of Pearce's in-service teacher participants are in elementary schools, this is not clearly stated from the beginning. While the classroom examples given do show the potential of the *Awakening to Languages* approach specifically at an introductory level, which is where it has been primarily located (Candelier et al., 2012), the reader can only guess how it might work at other levels. Additionally, Candelier (2003 in Candelier et al., 2012, p. 7) states that *Awakening to Languages* is best suited when "some of the learning activities are concerned with languages which the school generally does not intend to teach." While this may describe other languages that students in a plurilingually-positive primary school classroom might be exposed to, it does not describe English, which remains the primary foreign language taught in Japanese secondary schools. Therefore, how such classes might treat what will be the target language in children's future schooling relative to other languages in which they are less likely to receive instructed exposure remains a necessary distinction.

A further criticism is regarding the place of English in elementary schools overall. Since Pearce acknowledges elsewhere that "sufficient financial and human resources have not been invested" in preparing and implementing English in Japanese elementary schools, and that these teachers felt hesitant and unprepared to teach it (Oyama & Pearce, 2019, p. 71), some readers may think that Pearce is in essence making a virtue out of MEXT's vice of over-mandating and under-resourcing performance in the establishment of elementary school English by holding up Kana-sensei as a model. While it is certainly laudable that she, who had rejected

elementary school foreign language education outright, came to see it as compatible with her school's peace education focus, one still wonders what might have been had greater investment in planning curriculum and training teachers for elementary school English been made. That said, such an argument might miss the positive basis for language development that Awakening to Languages can engender, and the examples shown in this volume demonstrate the potential of this approach to develop learners' investigative skills. But whether this approach facilitates later competence in English or any target language is not answered here, though some research suggests the potential of Awakening to Languages to foster subsequent language development (e.g. Ben Maad, 2022; Lourenço & Andrade, 2014), the inclusion of which would have strengthened Pearce's argument.

Finally, while the visual methods used in this volume are rich and intriguing, they lack any metalanguage for describing how they *mean* to begin with. It might benefit those utilizing visual linguistic biographies to refer to the considerable work since the 1990s in multimodal image analysis, most notably Kress and van Leeuwen (e.g., 2021). This would give them the explanatory power to analyze the meanings created, with sufficient theoretical validity and transportability across contexts. In closing, for all readers concerned with instructed language education in Japan, *Plurilingual Education in a Monolingualised Nation* is a thought-provoking monograph examining counter-discursive practices that have the potential to positively influence the future of language teaching here. However, it may require a bit of its own counter reading to make productive.

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***Promoting Reflection on Language Learning: Lessons from a University Setting.* Neil Curry, Phoebe Lyon and Jo Mynard (Eds.). Multilingual Matters, 2023, xiii + 362 pp.
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A unique aspect of *Promoting Reflection on Language Learning* is its unified context: all contributions stem from research and practice at Kanda University of International Studies (KUIS) in Japan. The 26 contributors to the book comprise current or former instructors at KUIS and learning advisors at the university's Self-Access Learning Centre. As Hayo Reinders notes in the *Foreword*, this allows the authors to “paint a truly detailed and fascinating picture of reflection as it is ‘lived’ in practice at all its levels” (p. xiii).

The book is organised into 23 chapters that fall under three main divisions: Part 1: Setting the scene; Part 2: Theoretical constructs; Part 3: Insights from Initial Studies; Part 4: Intervention Studies; Part 5: Reflection and Technology; Part 6: Tools and Activities for Promoting Reflection in Practice; Part 7: Retrospective Reflections; and Part 8: conclusions. In addition to these eight parts, the preliminary pages and the introduction provide guidance to the reader by outlining the book's theoretical approaches, aims, research questions, and methodologies by reviewing the current literature. As the editors mention, each chapter reads as if it could stand on its own. This allows readers to choose and read what they might be most interested in or best fits their context after either looking at the Table of Contents or Chapter 1.

In Part I (Chapter 1), the editors remind readers of the importance of reflection in the language learning process and present the goal of the book by presenting four questions they aim to respond to: What is reflection on language learning? Why is it important? How can it be promoted inside and outside the classroom? How do we know if the process is working? (p. 3). They call out the programme administrators on how much change reflections could bring about when incorporated at an institutional level (p. 5). However, this also reminds readers that the setting of this book is very unique in the number of resources that this one institution has devoted

to it, and most practitioners may not be in similar situations. Chapter 2 introduces the organisation of the book, along with the short summaries of each chapter. It starts with a brief review of reflection on learning, providing the modern definition, and what past research has been conducted. This section also outlines the methodological approaches adopted by the authors. This is followed by an explanation of the educational setting in which the research projects were conducted.

The two chapters in Part 2 (Chapters 3 & 4) set the theoretical constructs of the book. Mynard begins Chapter 3 by providing Moon's (2005) definition of reflection and then provides a working definition for the volume; "reflection is the intentional examination of experiences, thoughts, and actions in order to learn about oneself and inform change or personal growth." (pp. 23-24) This is accompanied by a helpful Table (3.1), that summarises the common reflective models (p. 28). Among these models, Mynard provides an overview of the key models of reflections that are specifically applied to language learning (i.e. Schön, 1983; Kolb, 1984; Gibb, 1988). She refers to the difficulty of research on reflection as it concerns the "development of mental process which are only generally observable to researchers with specialised equipment and training in neuroscience." (p. 32) She also looks at how past research has attempted to measure the effect of reflections, such as Prince (2004) who looked into ways of researching how reflection affects academic achievement, and Lew and Schmidt (2011) which examined whether learners writing reflection journals made them better at self-reflections. In Chapter 4, Kato distinguishes two kinds of dialogue: dialogue in which the speaker conveys their message to the listener, and dialogue in which participants are guided into a more intense learning experience. The dialogue she discusses constitutes a part of reflection and emphasises that a reflective dialogue is different from other forms of reflection in that it is done through communication and that it allows switching viewpoints on one's perception of how things are done (p. 39).

Part 3 (Chapters 5-7) outlines the studies conducted at KUIS that build on the theoretical foundations described in Part 2, and how reflection is explored in the institution. Chapters 5 and 6 provide details of the initial action research projects that started in 2018. These concerned reflective activities that enable students to reflect more deeply and develop it (Chapter 5), looking into the reflective activities (Chapter 5), a rubric that analyses language learner reflections (Chapter 6). Chapter 7 discusses the need to train students to reflect effectively. The editors note that the results of these studies led them to develop the subsequent studies described in Part 4.

Part 4 (Chapters 9-12) presents a series of intervention studies. These chapters consider how reflection activities can be applied in practice. The authors discuss what successes they had in raising students' awareness of their strengths and weaknesses in reflection (Chapters 9, 11). Part 5 (Chapters 13-16) discusses the use of technology in the classroom. Chapter 13 focuses on the use of mobile-assisted language learning (MALL), while Chapter 14 examines the use of digital games to study language, which was not focussed reflective practice. Chapter 15 looks at the use of an online platform "Seesaw" and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are discussed in Chapter 16.

In Part 6 (Chapters 17-19), specific tools for promoting reflection are introduced, and the chapters share actual examples of written feedback given from the advisors to the students on their submissions. Chapter 18, helpfully present examples of activities that train reflective writing skills and share three characteristics they identified that are necessary to foster autonomy and competence in reflection: "revisiting with intention; systematic, recursive skill development; and relevance to self" (p. 285).

The chapters in Part 7 (Chapters 20-22) are anecdotal in a sharing their authors' reflections on critical incidents that made them realise the importance and need for training in reflective practices. These chapters remind us that practitioners, not just learners, benefit from reflections and training for reflective practices. The final part of the book summarises the volume and leaves the readers with suggestions for further research, such as looking into the support that teachers might need to allow them to promote reflective activities in the curriculum (p. 355).

The editors describe the book as intended for practising educators and early-career researchers (p. 5), but its viable audience is wider. The book is accessible to researchers and practitioners at all levels, who may be interested in incorporating reflections into their classrooms, whether at the tertiary, secondary, or even middle-school levels. The clear presentation of the setting, participants and methodology should allow adaptation of findings to all different levels and the suggestions for further research and literature recommendations make the book widely useful as a resource for all types of teaching.

The aims of the book, introduced in Chapter 1, are to "provide insights into research and practices for promoting learner reflection." (p.5). The book successfully responds to the first aim—"What is reflection on language learning?"—by providing a brief history of reflection and models in Chapter 2. In fact, it was unclear to me whether all chapter authors shared

the same understanding of the definition of reflection presented by Mynard in Chapter 2, or how that was conveyed to the authors. Considering the second aim—“Why is it important?”—the book discusses the importance of reflection in terms of empirical observation (i.e. students learning as indicated in the chapters and instructors experience described in chapters 20, 21 & 22) and theoretical and practice.

Regarding the third aim—How can reflection be promoted inside and outside the classroom?—the book contained a lot of discussion on the reflective activities inside the classroom, but not so much for outside the classroom. Yet, reflection outside the classroom seem to be imperative to answer the fourth aim,—How do we know if the process is working?—there is discussion of the true test of engagement. Some chapters described the success of increasing the students’ awareness through reflections; however, the time to measure such success was very limited to during the semester, the academic year, or while the students were enrolled in the programme. There is a question of what it really means for a process to work. It could mean for the students to engage in reflective practices outside the institutional setting, and possibly carry on beyond university. Future research could look into whether the programme has shaped the habits and skills so the students continue with the practices by themselves, for example those who have enrolled in graduate programmes.

A further point which may have been useful to elucidate is when the various practices and studies discussed in the book took place. Apart from identifying the initial studies from 2018, and some indication that some data were collected during the COVID-19 outbreak (p. 350), it is unclear when the practices and the study described in the book took place. Some chapters have discussed the success of using technology, namely the use of certain software, in reflective activities. Not all programmes or instructors are able to purchase the software for classroom use, and they get outdated quickly. How the practices could be adapted more generally would have been helpful. In addition, the book was published in 2023. Much software is now, and more will likely be AI-assisted. The chapters were published before this new technology, therefore, the chapters discussing the technologies may have to be updated soon. The questions faced by researchers are: to what extent, how, and whether AI should be incorporated into reflection in learning?

I particularly found Chapter 12 to be interesting in the way the authors explored the effectiveness of reflections on fluency in writing classes. In my own practice, I have incorporated reflections in discussion and presenta-

tion classes, as well as extensive reading, project-based or content-based classes, but had not considered doing so in writing classes. The authors write, “We were unaware of any studies addressing reflection on writing fluency and wanted to provide second language learners with a method of developing their language learning through reflection on writing.” (p. 167) This chapter, I believe, helps to fulfil this aim and support the proposition that student reflections can be incorporated into various kinds of language classes.

This demonstrates that reflection can be successfully used in more uncommon classroom settings highlights that the instituted environment seems in play at KUIS where coordinated practice enables reflections to be used in various settings. This success aside, however, readers may have found it more useful if a more common classroom settings were included, such as student reflections in an intensive reading classroom, and presentation classrooms. This may have enabled readers to compare what they already do with their own students as well as seek ways to improve their current approaches. To give personal and specific examples, two project-based courses that I taught both required students to reflect on their contribution either during or after the process of the project (See Tsukamoto, 2022; Tsukamoto, 2024 for details.) Assuming that project-based courses or an equivalent took place at KUIS, if there had been a chapter in the volume that looked into the reflection in a project-based course, it would have been quite interesting for me to see what kind of tools might have been used and how reflections were incorporated into the courses.

That said, the book’s wide and cross-referencing discussion of practices is broadly useful, and readers will find much of interest in the chapters, both theoretically and practically. Readers who are in search of specific ways to incorporate reflections in their own classrooms or looking for research on reflections using a specific research method might find it useful to look at the Appendix in Chapter 23 first as the table provides a summary of the tools and research methods and tools used in the chapters.

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The Twenty Most Effective Language Teaching Techniques.

I. S. P. Nation. Routledge, 2025. x + 323 pp.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003496151>

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Any experienced language teacher has likely developed a personal toolkit of go-to classroom techniques: tried-and-true practices shaped by reflection, student needs, institutional demands, and contextual realities. While such choices are valid and often effective, teachers seeking to ground their methods in pedagogical theory and empirical evidence will find immense value in I.S.P. Nation’s *The Twenty Most Effective Language Teaching Techniques*. Despite its title, the book does not present a ranked list of “top” strategies. Instead, Nation offers detailed explanations and classroom-ready guidance for twenty techniques, organized by skill domain and underpinned by foundational pedagogical frameworks and principles. This practical, research-informed resource invites educators to evaluate, refine, and expand their instructional repertoire.

The book opens with an introduction and four foundational chapters that establish the pedagogical lens through which each technique is later explored. Nation avoids a rigid definition of *technique*, using the term loosely alongside *activities* and *tasks*. He then outlines his Four Strands framework: meaning-focused input, meaning-focused output, language-focused learning, and fluency development, which serves as both a theoretical anchor and practical categorization tool. The section concludes with a discussion of the eight principles of learning: motivation, self-efficacy, focus, accuracy, repetition, time-on-task, elaboration, analysis, that Nation argues are essential to the effectiveness of any technique. Although readers may choose to skip directly to the techniques, these initial chapters offer critical scaffolding that informs the rationale, categorization, and classroom application of each technique. For readers already familiar with Nation's pedagogical theories, it is easy to use the table of contents to navigate to a specific skill area or technique. Each chapter is relatively short and includes a unique DOI, underscoring the book's modular design and inviting scholarly engagement by making individual techniques easily citable for research or teacher training contexts.

The remainder of the book is organized primarily by language skill: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing, with two additional sections devoted to general-purpose techniques and suggestions for further research. Each chapter follows a consistent and accessible format, addressing key questions: What is the technique? What are the learning goals? How does it help learning? How can it be implemented effectively? What digital applications exist? How does it connect to other classroom tasks? And what does the research say regarding the effectiveness of the technique? In responding to these questions, Nation provides clear explanations, step-by-step implementation guidance, and concrete examples, including sample worksheets and classroom-ready activities. While the book is rich in practical tasks, it is not simply a grab-bag activity handbook. Rather than offering one-size-fits-all solutions, Nation frames each technique as an adaptable model, encouraging teachers to tailor tasks based on learners' levels, goals, and contexts. Each chapter concludes with research questions linked to the eight learning principles, making the book as valuable for teacher practitioners as for researchers seeking to extend the line of inquiry into the investigation of the pedagogical effectiveness of these techniques.

Nation's writing is both accessible yet academically grounded, making the book suitable for a wide range of readers: from novice instructors to experienced teacher educators and researchers. The prose is deliberately

non-technical, with theoretical terms introduced only when necessary and often accompanied by clear explanations and examples. Visual aids such as tables and figures are frequently employed throughout the text to illustrate both pedagogical principles and classroom tasks, enhancing clarity and utility. This style reflects the book's dual aim: to provide immediate classroom applications while promoting reflective, research-informed practice. One of the book's most notable strengths is its balance of empirical support and practical relevance. Nation draws on both seminal and contemporary research in second language acquisition, as well as foundational studies in general education, to justify the inclusion of each technique. Importantly, these references are woven seamlessly into the text, allowing readers to understand the research context without being burdened by dense literature reviews. As Nation puts it, "research provides the guidelines, experience and experimentation equally inform" (p. 38): a philosophy evident throughout the book. For those wishing to delve deeper, each chapter's DOI and citation trail offer a direct link to the broader scholarly conversation.

Another fitting title for this might be *Paul Nation's Greatest Hits*. Readers familiar with his earlier work will recognize many of the techniques he has long advocated. Across the twenty techniques, Nation presents a well-balanced mix of time-tested practices and more recent innovations. Some are undisputed staples of language teaching: vocabulary flashcards, dictation, substitution tables, and the 4/3/2 fluency activity, while others reflect newer trends, such as extensive reading and listening, 10-minute writing, and problem-solving speaking tasks.

Among the classics, dictation: described by Nation as "a listening-based form of intensive reading," receives the most extensive treatment. This is due in part to the many variations he includes, such as running dictation, guided dictation, peer dictation, and hybrid forms like delayed copying and dicto-comp. Each is clearly explained and easily adaptable, making the chapter one of the most immediately usable in the book. Despite its longevity in the classroom, Nation points out that "there is no direct research focusing on dictation as a language learning technique" (p. 85), noting instead that research exists on its foundational components: memory span, repetition, and corrective feedback. These frequent invitations to future research are one of the book's quiet strengths. Extensive reading, another of Nation's well-known interests, receives similarly detailed attention, framed as a primary method for acquiring vocabulary and grammar through large volumes of input. Nation goes even further in this section, asserting that "the single most effective improvement that a teacher could

make to a language course would be to include a substantial extensive reading programme” (p. 173).

The chapter on extensive listening represents a relatively new interest for Nation. Briefly mentioned in his earlier work *What Should Every ESL Teacher Know?* (2013), it is expanded and updated here to include digital resources such as TED Talks and Xreading’s text-to-speech functionality for graded readers. Still, Nation concedes that current pedagogical technology has not yet fully addressed key issues such as vocabulary control and speech rate, factors that affect accessibility for low proficiency learners. On the whole, the techniques are thoughtfully explained and grounded in sound pedagogy, but there are certain limitations of the book that merit closer examination.

While Nation’s Four Strands framework is a useful tool for organizing the book, its application occasionally feels overly prescriptive. In addition to using the strands to categorize each technique, Nation includes specific suggestions for the amount of instructional time that should be allocated to each technique: sometimes as precise as 1/16th of a course. Although it is meant as a guideline, it does seem like an impractical expectation for most teachers and program coordinators to make such detailed calculations. Although the book’s modular structure allows it to be read technique-by-technique or cover-to-cover, when read sequentially, the consistent format of each chapter can feel repetitive. Nation frequently references the same studies, revisits foundational principles, and cross-references other chapters—pedagogically sound in terms of reinforcing key concepts, but potentially tedious for linear readers. There are also occasional inconsistencies in terminology and missed opportunities to reflect current trends. The use of terms like *mobile* or *cell phone*, instead of the more widely used *smartphone*, as well as references to bilingual dictionaries and letter writing, suggests a recycling of content from older works. More notably, the book does not address emerging technologies such as large language models (e.g., ChatGPT), which have become increasingly relevant in discussions about language learning and instruction. Terminological overlap is another minor issue that may cause confusion. For example, the use of interchangeable terms such as between *techniques*, *activities*, and *tasks* as well as more familiar terms in the field such as *timed writing* and *speed writing* instead being referred to here as the more specific *10-minute writing*, despite Nation admitting the arbitrariness of the allotted time. Finally, the absence of references to Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) is surprising. The problem-solving speaking technique, in particular, shares

significant conceptual ground with TBLT, yet the connection is never made explicit. Given the relevance and influence of TBLT in current SLA research and pedagogy, this omission feels like a missed opportunity to ground Nation's techniques more firmly within contemporary discourse.

These are relatively minor critiques of what is ultimately an exceptional resource for language educators seeking to expand their repertoire of teaching techniques. The book also serves as a cumulative reflection of Nation's decades-long contribution to the field of language education. Renowned for his foundational research on vocabulary acquisition—including the creation of the widely used Vocabulary Levels Test (Nation, 1983), Nation's expertise is particularly evident in the chapter on vocabulary flashcards, though it expands and permeates every aspect of the book. What makes this book especially valuable is its ability to synthesize a vast body of research and practical knowledge into a format that is immediately usable by teachers. It exemplifies how scholarly work can bridge the often-lamented gap between research and classroom practice, a concern noted by Ellis and Shintani (2014) and many others. Early in the book, Nation reminds readers that "learning how to learn can change people's lives" (p. 54); this is a sentiment that encapsulates the book's broader goal: to equip teachers with not just activities, but with a pedagogical mindset that promotes learner autonomy and long-term growth.

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***Nicky Hockly's 30 Essentials for Using Artificial Intelligence* (Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers). Nicky Hockly. Cambridge University Press and Assessment, 2024. ix + 126 pp. Approx. ¥2,185. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781009804509>**

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Nicky Hockly's 30 Essentials for Using Artificial Intelligence is part of the Cambridge Handbooks for Language Teachers Pocket Editions series, edited by Scott Thornbury. The series aims to provide short, accessible texts with practical guidance for teachers, and this volume is no exception. Hockly, a long-standing contributor to the field of educational technology in language teaching and learning, draws on both her experience writing practical teaching resources (e.g., Hockly, 2017) and more theoretical collaborations on digital literacies (e.g., Pegrum et al., 2022) to effectively demystify artificial intelligence (AI) for language teachers.

Although most chapters include references, which range from empirical studies in peer-reviewed journals to news articles and blog posts, this book is not necessarily written for an academic audience. Rather, it is aimed at practicing language teachers, reflected in the accessible writing style and the inclusion of step-by-step teaching ideas throughout. Hockly engages with broader discourses around AI and relates them to language teaching and learning, enabling teachers to navigate both pedagogical uses and the wider social and ethical implications of AI.

As indicated by the title, Hockly presents thirty essentials for using AI and each of these has its own short chapter. The thirty chapters are organized thematically into four sections that progressively build upon each other, yet each chapter remains sufficiently self-contained to be read independently. Hockly helpfully includes brief summaries at the beginning of each section and chapter, and cites chapter numbers when referring back to previously covered concepts or topics.

The first section, *Setting the Scene*, lays the groundwork for readers by defining key terms and introducing various types of AI, including rule-based, data-driven, and generative AI (GenAI). Hockly traces the history of AI in language teaching and learning from its early origins in the 1960s to the current landscape of GenAI chatbot tools, like ChatGPT. She offers

a clear and accessible explanation of neural networks and large language models (LLMs) which underpin the GenAI tools used in language teaching and learning, such as voice recognition and chatbots. This is invaluable information for teachers because it facilitates understanding of why the tools have the limitations they do and can thus inform pedagogical decision-making. This section also connects AI technologies to second language acquisition concepts of motivation, scaffolding, and feedback, examining the extent to which AI tools can support learners in these areas. Further, Hockly draws attention to the issue that many popular AI-powered apps for language learning are based on mechanistic, behaviorist views of language learning. The section ends by critiquing the “cycle of hype and hyperbole” (Hockly, 2024, p. 20) around novel educational technologies and how GenAI is the latest candidate for techno-solutionism, encouraging teachers to develop critical digital literacy for themselves and their learners.

The second section, *AI in Language Teaching and Learning*, explores practical applications of AI inside and outside of the language classroom. Hockly covers a wide range of AI-powered tools including chatbots, adaptive learning systems, augmented reality (AR) and virtual reality (VR). This section adopts a critical lens to explore the affordances and drawbacks of AI for both learners and teachers. For instance, whereas earlier chatbots offered limited interaction, GenAI now allows learners to engage in self-directed conversation practice with significantly more natural and coherent dialogue. However, it may unfairly penalize non-native speakers’ pronunciation, as LLMs are often trained on data reflecting only so-called “standard” language varieties. Hockly also explores how teachers may save time by utilizing GenAI for administrative work, developing lesson materials, or differentiating lessons. She emphasizes the importance of teachers using their own judgment on AI output before using it with learners and reminds us of the duty to protect our learners’ data. Particularly noteworthy is the chapter on developing writing skills with AI, as there are concerns in the language teaching field that GenAI’s ability to produce coherent texts could lead to misuse or hinder learners’ skill development (Moorhouse, 2024). Throughout, Hockly positions AI as a potential learning aid and encourages teachers with practical ideas to support learners to use it responsibly.

In the third section, *The Big Questions*, Hockly broadens the scope of the book to examine in more detail the ethical, philosophical, and legal issues emerging from AI. These chapters engage with complex topics such as fairness and bias in AI systems, accessibility, the digital divide, data ownership

and privacy, and assessment and academic integrity. Hockly encourages teachers to raise these issues with learners, offering classroom discussion activities and ideas for building critical digital literacy. This approach encapsulates her advocacy of 'human-centred AI' (Hockly, 2024, p. 70), which argues for use of AI which enhances teaching and learning by focusing on AI augmenting human interaction and skills, rather than replacing them. This section also addresses concerns about AI-enabled cheating in assessments, suggesting more authentic and process-oriented alternatives, such as project-based learning. These chapters strike a balance between criticality and practicality, aiming to equip teachers with the knowledge needed to make pedagogically and ethically sound decisions.

The final section, Self-development and AI, focuses on wellbeing, teacher professional development, and learner autonomy. Hockly addresses the anxiety many teachers feel about the potential of AI to replace human educators and recommends that teachers develop AI literacy as a path to confidence and agency. She empowers practicing teachers to engage in action research projects by providing a six-step framework and an imagined case study to illustrate the process and its benefits. This section also explores how AI can support professional development and deepen understanding through effective prompt engineering and Socratic dialogue with GenAI chatbots. The final chapter looks toward the future of AI in education, considering concerns such as teacher deskilling or the possible use of AI in place of teachers in underserved educational contexts. Rather than make firm predictions, Hockly invites readers to remain critically engaged as the field evolves.

The pace of innovation in AI development creates obvious difficulties in writing a book about practical teaching applications of AI. For example, this book was written and published before Deepseek emerged in early 2025 and disrupted the GenAI industry (Baptista, 2025). Hockly is forward-thinking and mitigates this issue to a great extent by not focusing on particular tools, but on their main functionality. Rather than focusing on ChatGPT, she gives a clear explanation of the LLMs which underpin many GenAI tools and explores how they produce images and text. This AI literacy then becomes the foundation for understanding how the tools may be used appropriately for language teaching and learning. For example, knowing that GenAI works by using its training data to generate a plausible series of chunks of language based on statistical methods helps teachers to understand why GenAI may "hallucinate" and create plausible but incorrect information. Or knowing about the biases in training data and program-

ming of GenAI can support understanding of why AI-generated images may perpetuate gender and racial stereotypes. This can, in turn, inform what we teach learners to help them use the tools effectively and appropriately. Inevitably, any published book on AI will soon become outdated, but Hockly's approach helps to extend the book's shelf life in terms of relevance.

One of the book's most significant contributions is its thorough yet accessible treatment of various ethical issues surrounding AI use in language education. For example, the environmental impact of AI is an area which has not received enough attention in the language teaching field (Maley, 2025). Hockly's book does not shy away from addressing environmental issues caused by the vast amounts of electricity and water GenAI consumes and proposes ways we can support learners to research and discuss these issues. Hockly also explores issues which many teachers may not be aware of, such as the invisible human labour behind training AI, which is often done by English-speaking graduates in the Global South under precarious working conditions. By presenting these important topics alongside practical suggestions for classroom discussions and activities, Hockly not only raises readers' awareness but also empowers them to foster critical digital literacy among their learners. In doing so, the book positions itself as a rare and necessary resource that equips educators to navigate not just how AI can be used in language teaching and learning, but also to consider collaboratively with learners about whether or not it should be used.

Another strength of this book is that each section stands alone. If your interest is solely in language teaching and learning, you can read only those chapters without needing any background knowledge from the prior introductory section on AI. In addition, Hockly's straightforward explanations do not require any technical background to understand, and any linguistic or pedagogical concepts discussed are clearly explained. The short chapters and clear ideas are suited to all levels of practicing language teachers as they present the essential key information in an accessible and easy-to-digest way. Although this brevity may leave more academically focused readers desiring more detail, the reference list included in most chapters could offer a starting point for further reading.

The book is comprehensive in its inclusion and explanation of AI tools, though chapters on AR and VR may initially seem out of place in a book about AI and language teaching. While both technologies utilize AI, they are not commonplace in the language classroom due to issues of cost and accessibility as they require each individual to have a device like a smartphone or an expensive VR headset. However, as one aim of the book

is to develop teachers' digital literacies, these chapters have value for broadening readers' awareness of the wide variety of digital tools which utilize AI technology. Further, Hockly addresses the issue of cost by adapting classroom activities using AR and VR to avoid the need for expensive equipment. For instance, she suggests VR activities which are possible without headsets, such as an online VR museum tour. Overall, Hockly maintains throughout that teachers should use their expertise to weigh the pedagogical value of technology integration into the classroom carefully and come to their own conclusions for their contexts.

Since Hockly is writing for a broad audience of language teachers, suggesting specific activities poses a challenge, as readers' teaching contexts may vary considerably. Most of the teaching suggestions throughout the book focus on group discussions and project work, which may work well in secondary and tertiary classroom contexts but may not be directly applicable to all learner levels or teaching contexts. Nonetheless, experienced language teachers can draw on the knowledge and teaching ideas presented throughout the book as a springboard to adapt activities to their specific contexts. Taken as a whole, the foundational AI literacy and knowledge Hockly provides can equip teachers to engage with AI more thoughtfully and critically within their language teaching practice.

To conclude, this book is a timely and practical contribution to the growing conversation on AI in language education. The book strikes a careful balance between accessibility and critical insight, offering clear explanations of key concepts while maintaining a strong pedagogical focus. Importantly, the book does not present AI as a solution but encourages informed, reflective decision-making grounded in careful ethical considerations and established principles of language teaching and learning. By addressing not only the pedagogical affordances of AI but also the ethical, environmental, and social concerns, Hockly equips teachers with both practical tools and the critical digital literacy to use them and instruct their learners appropriately. Further, it empowers teachers to develop their own guidelines around ethical and appropriate AI use in their classrooms and institutions.

The book's thematic organization, straightforward explanations, and range of classroom activities make it suitable for practicing language teachers who are interested in integrating AI into their teaching in principled and reflective ways. Those less familiar with AI will appreciate the accessible language and explanation of key concepts and how they relate to language teaching and learning. Although the book is primarily targeting

practicing language teachers, the comprehensive yet straightforward presentation of information, bolstered by a diverse range of sources, provides an informative overview for anyone working in education at varying stages of familiarity with AI.

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***Mindsets in Language Education*. Adrian Leis, Åsta Haukås, Nigel Mantou Lou and Sachiko Nakamura. Multilingual Matters, 2025. xxi + 273 pp.
<https://doi.org/10.21832/9781800418325>**

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Mindsets in Language Education, edited by Leis et al., explores the role of the recently growing field of mindsets, beliefs individuals hold regarding their intelligence (Dweck, 1999), in foreign/second language (L2) learning and teaching across various contexts. The book addresses a wide range of key themes, including what types of mindsets learners have in different L2

learning domains and how they are uniquely linked with outcomes (e.g., psychological variables and learning outcomes), how teachers perceive their teaching mindset and how these are manifested in daily teaching practice, and what strategies practitioners can employ to foster growth mindsets among learners. Through these inquiries, the editors challenge the common myth that language learning skills are innate and highlight the importance of nurture over nature in the process of L2 learning and teaching, which requires sustained, long-term motivation and engagement.

Given the expanding body of research on L2 mindsets (Lou & Noels, 2019; Mercer & Ryan, 2010), this book establishes a unique and timely presence in the field. The volume spans a variety of topics on the role of mindsets, rigorously highlighting their importance in long-term engagement in L2 education for both research and pedagogical practices. It critically examines theoretical foundations, empirical findings, and practical interventions across three parts. The introductory chapter outlines the history of mindset research and establishes a conceptual foundation for the chapters that follow, helping readers to situate mindset theory within the broader field of L2 education.

Part 1 (Chapters 2–6) investigates learner mindsets across diverse L2 contexts. Teng and Mizumoto (Chapter 2) develop and validate a tool measuring growth mindsets in vocabulary learning among Chinese EFL undergraduate students, opening a new research area of L2 mindsets in relation to vocabulary development. Nakamura and Leis (Chapter 3) highlight how cultural influences play a crucial role in shaping the interconnections between L2 emotions, goal orientations, and mindsets. Apple et al. (Chapter 4) compare mindsets between STEM and non-STEM Japanese university students, finding no significant group differences but supporting the conceptual separability of growth and fixed mindsets. Khajavy and Vaziri (Chapter 5) demonstrate that mastery goals predict growth mindsets positively and fixed mindsets negatively and that anxiety is mediated by only fixed mindsets in the Iranian context. Interestingly, Sundqvist (Chapter 6), through the case of Anders, an 83-year-old Swedish third-age L2 learner, shows how a strong growth mindset enhances motivation and engagement in L2 learning, well-being, and identity formation in late adulthood.

Part 2 (Chapters 7–11) shifts focus to teacher mindsets and their effects on pedagogy and learners. Kırmızı (Chapter 7) finds that teachers with growth mindsets tend to implement engaging and supportive teaching, whereas teachers with fixed mindsets rely on more traditional grammar-focused instructions with frequent L1 use. Kızıldağ (Chapter 8) uses

narrative inquiry to show how mentors' mindsets shape and foster the pre-service teachers' development during the practicum period. Yonata's autoethnographic study (Chapter 9) illustrates how growth mindset strategies (e.g., continuous efforts and effective strategy use) supported his professional identity formation as a PhD student and early career EFL educator, in the face of challenges. Haukås and Mercer (Chapter 10) build on their previous work (Haukås & Mercer, 2022) by investigating experienced teachers' beliefs regarding teaching competence development. They propose an insightful distinction between acquisition and learning view of mindsets, framed as being socially shaped by institutional and cultural contexts. Grounded in Chinese sayings that endorse capability decline over time, Yao and Wang (Chapter 11) explore a unique picture of decremental mindsets and its links with anxiety and motivation through a person-focused approach, suggesting that cultural influences may significantly mediate motivation.

Part 3 (Chapters 12–14) presents intervention studies designed to foster growth mindset and motivation. Castillo (Chapter 12) describes a series of online sessions with Chilean secondary students that increased growth mindset but had limited long-term impact on motivation. Drom and Lou (Chapter 13) report on a semester-long intervention in Canada using tasks that emphasized students' metacognitive skills (how L2 learning competences can be developed). Their results support the usefulness of these metacognitive tasks to develop growth mindsets and motivation. Finally, Ramirez et al. (Chapter 14) conceptualize growth mindset practices in the Colombian context, illustrating an architecture of growth mindset teaching practice through sayings, doings, and relating. Teachers created process-focused classrooms that emphasized resilience, challenges and mistakes, and flexibility in teaching styles.

In the concluding chapter, the editors beautifully synthesize key insights and offer future directions for research and practical strategies for practitioners. One promising direction is the examination of mindsets in relation to the use of technology in L2 learning, such as machine translation and generative artificial intelligence (GenAI). In relation to pedagogical practices, the editors also advocate for integrating mindset-driven pedagogical ideas into various teaching approaches, such as task-based language teaching (TBLT), noting a natural, conceptual alignment with growth mindset principles.

Although mindsets have received increasing attention in L2 research, existing studies remain fragmented and inconclusive (Lou, 2025). A large body of prior work has focused primarily on L2 learners, with relatively

little attention given to teachers' mindsets or to how contextual and sociocultural factors influence mindset development (Lou, 2025; Lou & Noels, 2019, 2020). Moreover, methodological approaches have often been descriptive or correlational in nature, typically limited to a narrow range of psychological constructs. These approaches have lacked a holistic perspective and rarely included intervention and longitudinal studies. As a result, meta-analytic studies have reported weak to moderate effects of mindsets on achievement and adaptive outcomes in L2 education (Lou & Noels, 2019; Shirvan et al., 2024), highlighting the need for more nuanced, context-specific, and systematic research.

In response, this volume makes a notable conceptual contribution and advancement by foregrounding the role of sociocultural and educational conditions in shaping mindsets, offering both context-specific insights and broader cross-contextual patterns. L2 mindsets are explored from various angles: learners and teachers, providing valuable insights into how mindsets manifest and interact within varied educational landscapes. The contexts covered in this book span a wide range of educational levels (e.g., secondary to tertiary education), ages (young to old learners), domains (vocabulary to general L2 learning), teaching experience (pre-service and experienced teachers), geographical locations (Asian, European, and North and South American countries), and cultures (collectivist and individualist cultures). These diverse perspectives address the frequently cited issue of the simple overgeneralization of the findings attributed to geographical and cultural aspects (i.e., Western versus Eastern cultures) and individual differences. Together, these in-depth insights offer learners, practitioners, and researchers valuable ideas and inspiration for future research and practical applications of approaches to empower learners and teachers to become resilient and persevere in the long journey of L2 learning and teaching.

Methodologically, the volume is also commendable for its breadth and innovation. It features a variety of designs: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, to explore mindsets from multiple perspectives and approaches, including descriptive and experimental approaches. These innovative approaches and methodological diversity enable a richer understanding of how mindsets are manifested, sustained, and transformed in language education and how they may be operationalized in future large-scale studies. Notably, the experimental studies in Part 3 help to bridge the gap between theory and practice, which is often pointed out in previous research on L2 education (Sato & Loewen, 2022). In this regard, this

volume is not merely a collection of studies but serves as a springboard for future scholarship and pedagogical innovation, striving “to continue on the road to understanding why students and teachers make the decisions they do and how we might be able to help them make the decisions that lead to their success” (p. 272).

One notable limitation, however, is the book’s exclusive focus on English learning and teaching contexts. Despite its title, *Mindsets in Language Education* does not address mindsets in languages other than English (LOTEs). This oversight is significant, given the unequal status of languages worldwide. English maintains a dominant, privileged position in classrooms and research, while LOTEs are treated marginally. Learners and teachers of LOTEs might be especially susceptible to fixed mindsets due to sociopolitical and ideological norms, such as monolingualism which views English as the only necessary language. Investigating mindsets in these contexts would reveal important and nuanced insights into how sociocultural factors in relation to language education influence and are influenced by mindset development and how learners and teachers maintain and improve motivation and identity in less supported situations. For instance, in contexts where bilingualism is less accepted, LOTE learners and teachers may struggle with self-efficacy or be influenced by social attitudes that discourage long-term language investment. Mindset theory could illuminate the psychological barriers and affordances that shape LOTE learning and teaching.

Despite the noted gap, *Mindsets in Language Education* is a significant and timely contribution to the field. It brings together a rich collection of studies that not only advance theoretical understandings but also provide educators with concrete strategies for future practical classroom application. It successfully highlights the complexity of mindsets, making a persuasive case for the importance of growth mindsets in language education. This book is highly recommended for all L2 researchers, teacher educators, language instructors, curriculum developers, and policymakers who are responsible for and interested in mindsets and motivation in language education. The practical strategies presented in the book have the potential to foster resilience and effective learning and teaching approaches, ultimately contributing to sustained motivation, successful L2 outcomes, and optimal well-being, both academically and personally.

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