J. W. SCHWIETER (ED.), INNOVATIVE RESEARCH AND PRACTICES IN SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND BILINGUALISM
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As the title suggests, this edited volume stages an in-depth discussion of new and innovative studies on second language (L2) learning and teaching. Topics on second language acquisition (SLA) and bilingualism are revisited and presented as a comprehensive state-of-the-art compilation. The book consists of two sections, each aligning with a major perspective in the field. The first section comprises nine chapters, which are based on linguistic perspectives. The second section consists of five chapters, which are constructed within cognitive perspectives. Altogether, this book weaves together theoretical discussions using evidence from empirical studies to offer useful insights into understanding the process of second language acquisition.

In the first chapter, VanPatten reminds us that language is a complex concept, which cannot be and should not be reduced to a single construct. This seemingly self-evident yet frequently ignored notion is, according to VanPatten, one of the fundamentals in SLA. It leads to the recognition of at least two distinct domains that play the most important roles in language acquisition: mental representation and skill. VanPatten argues that while learners need to have both to function in the target language, neither is teachable – at least not in a direct sense. Both are built gradually through the exposure to and the usage of the target language. What classroom teaching and/or intervention can do, however, is to ‘facilitate [their] development’ (p.18).

Building on this perspective, in Chapter 2, Wong reviews some influential pedagogical methods and points out the essential issues in teaching practices. Wong emphasises the importance of understanding which domain of language is to be developed and how to help learners develop it. In this chapter, Wong shows that both input and output play important roles in such development and the author offers many creative ideas for classroom activities to help learners develop both the underlying representation and the skill itself.

In the third chapter, Behney and Gass integrate priming and interaction to explore the issue of whether or not (and if so, how) input affects output in terms of syntactic choice. They discuss the priming effect in relation to the Accessibility Hierarchy in a second language learning context and show that, within the constraint of the Accessibility Hierarchy, priming aids learning. This innovative study demonstrates that applying syntactic priming in
classroom activities such as conversational interactions may benefit learners in learning complex structures.

Chapter 4 emphasises the importance of linguistic precision in pedagogical practices. Motivated by a generative perspective, Long and Rothman demonstrate that pedagogical practices lacking linguistic precision often result in the formation of a defiant system consisting of oversimplified rules learned in the classroom, and this eventually impedes native-like L2 performance. Long and Rothman recommend aligning the descriptive and the pedagogical grammars and applying them to classroom practice to accommodate the needs of tutored learners.

In Chapter 5, Bruhn de Garavito examines the performance of learners with different proficiency levels using mood choice in Spanish relative clauses. Given the complexity of such a linguistic category in that language, Bruhn de Garavito recommends that it is best taught in contextualised situations. Chapter 5 concludes with an emphasis on the need for learners to be provided with not only the exposure to contextualized input but also the chance to produce contextualised output.

Chapter 6 deals with second language vocabulary teaching. In this chapter, Barcroft summarises the major findings of research in this area especially in the area of lexical input processing. Barcroft proposes input-based incremental (IBI) vocabulary instruction as an effective pedagogical practice. He lists ten principles of this practice and provides a sample lesson which applies them in a language classroom. Substantive and rich in content, this chapter is a detailed practical resource for L2 teachers and researchers.

In the next chapter, Presson, Davy, and MacWhinney explore the benefits of integrating the advances in technology into second language teaching and learning. The authors endorse the experimental Computer-Assisted Language Learning (eCALL) as an effective pedagogical intervention given that it works well with feedback, explicit instructions, and practices. They believe that coordinating the advancement of technology into classroom pedagogy benefits the SLA enterprise, in both research and practice. By also pointing out the current limitations in this area, Presson, Davy, and MacWhinney suggest some potential methods to develop this method beyond its current state.

Chapter 8 builds on two approaches to address the issue of variability in second language data: a psychological cognitive approach and a formal linguistic one. The aim is to show that both approaches can inform each other in second language studies. In this chapter, Perpiñán investigates the variability surrounding the L2 data on Spanish relative clause production. She argues that both task modality and linguistic structure account for variability in L2 data. These two variables, one being cognitive and the other linguistic, when put together, offer a better understanding of L2 data. Perpiñán concludes that the two perspectives are complementary in the study of SLA.
Also dealing with variation in L2 data, Chapter 9 explores the output of heritage Spanish speakers and argues that variation in tense and aspect morphology may result from first language attrition over life span and/or incomplete development. In this chapter, Cuza, Pérez-Tattam, Barajas, Miller, and Sadowski point out the importance of using pedagogical interventions such as reading aloud activities to reinforce the decreasing target linguistic forms in the heritage speakers’ output production.

Progressing towards cognitive perspectives in the second section of this volume, Chapter 10 reviews studies on bilingual processing. Friesen and Bialystok argue in this chapter that cognitive control and language representations are two different processes; however, their inevitable interaction actually benefits bilinguals, especially in lexical access and processing. Friesen and Bialystok recommend that these two frameworks be considered, and incorporated, into immersion education to help the learners develop and strengthen both their language knowledge and cognitive control ability.

Schwieter and Ferreira review studies that look into the underlying cognitive processes involved in bilingual oral production in Chapter 11. In this chapter, the authors explore the nature of language selection in bilingual speech production and the dynamic interaction between conceptual systems and lexical repertoire that underpins such a process in bilinguals. In addition, they also examine these issues beyond bilingualism. Finally, Schwieter and Ferreira conclude that occasional uses of learners’ L1 in L2 learning context may raise learners’ attention by putting an additional demand on cognitive processes on the learners’ side, which is beneficial to both lexical access and language processing.

Moving from production to comprehension, Sunderman and Fancher in Chapter 12 explore the effect of simultaneous activation of lexical items in two languages. On the account of lexical access in particular, the authors emphasise the importance of understanding the different constraints bilinguals go through during the process of language selection. Equipped with such understanding, second language teachers may employ better teaching strategies to assist L2 learners with word recognition.

Chapter 13 by Jarvis, O’Malley, Jing, Zhang, Hill, Chan, and Sevostyanova deals with the cognitive processes underlying crosslinguistic influence. It is a comprehensive, state-of-the-art review of studies in this area. In this chapter, the authors suggest that the relationship among cognitive processes that motivate linguistic transfer in bilingualism is complex. They also highlight the recent advancement in crosslinguistic influence studies and their contribution to better understanding the causes of these linguistic transfers.

The final chapter, Chapter 14, is a concluding summary by Lee. It accentuates the pedagogical contributions of each chapter and classifies them into three major categories. As a concluding remark, Lee emphasises the importance of incorporating SLA research and findings into pedagogical instructions and suggests ways of implementing them in practice.
This edited volume addresses the gap between what the current classroom textbooks and instructional practices have to offer and what the learners really need in order to develop their L2 language ability. Taking the linguistic and the cognitive stances into account, the chapters in this book explore the issues involved in second language learning and processing from many different perspectives and offer possible pedagogical improvement to facilitate L2 learning. As the title suggests, the studies included in this volume are innovative and cutting edge; their contributions to refining second language pedagogy are invaluable.