

Second Language Learning and Teaching

Series Editor

Mirosław Pawlak

About the Series

The series brings together volumes dealing with different aspects of learning and teaching second and foreign languages. The titles included are both monographs and edited collections focusing on a variety of topics ranging from the processes underlying second language acquisition, through various aspects of language learning in instructed and non-instructed settings, to different facets of the teaching process, including syllabus choice, materials design, classroom practices and evaluation. The publications reflect state-of-the-art developments in those areas, they adopt a wide range of theoretical perspectives and follow diverse research paradigms. The intended audience are all those who are interested in naturalistic and classroom second language acquisition, including researchers, methodologists, curriculum and materials designers, teachers and undergraduate and graduate students undertaking empirical investigations of how second languages are learnt and taught.

Mirosław Pawlak
Editor

Extending the Boundaries of Research on Second Language Learning and Teaching

 Springer

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Contents

Part I Researching Teachers' Classroom Practices

- 1 The Influence of Visual Input Enhancement on the Acquisition of English Embedded Questions** 3
Agnieszka Pietrzykowska
- 2 Focused Communication Tasks as a Way of Developing Accurate Speaking at the Advanced Level** 15
Anna Broszkiewicz
- 3 Grammar Instruction in ELT: Insights from the Classroom** 29
Aleksandra Wach
- 4 Taking a Hard Look at the Task-Based Approach: Do Learners' Speaking Skills Really Develop and if So, How?** 41
Melanie Ellis
- 5 Teachers' Use of Internet Resources for Preparing English Lessons** 51
Liliana Piasecka

Part II Cultural, Pragmatic and Sociolinguistic Aspects of Second Language Acquisition

- 6 How to Develop Intercultural Competence in a Business English Classroom in Poland?** 63
Paweł Sobkowiak

7	Strangers in Paradise: The Role of Target Language Culture in Foreign Language Teaching Materials	77
	Marek Derenowski	
8	British Politeness in a Polish ESL/EFL Classroom?	93
	Agata Klimczak	
9	Poles Experiencing English (and Much More!) in Ireland	103
	David Singleton	
10	American Studies Web Resources: Are They Keeping Up with the Joneses?	111
	Bartosz Wolski	
Part III Individual Variation in Instructed Second Language Acquisition		
11	Intelligence in Gifted L2 Learners	129
	Adriana Biedroń	
12	Anxiety as a Cause of Poor Language Learning in Pakistan: A Case Study	143
	Bashir Khan and Zafar Iqbal Khattak	
13	Anxiety as a Factor Influencing the Use of Language Learning Strategies	149
	Mirosław Pawlak	
Part IV Teachers in Second Language Education		
14	Second Language Teacher Education: Shifting Paradigms and Future Challenges	169
	Dorota Potocka	
15	The First Year in the Classroom: Crossing the <i>Borderland</i> from Being a Student to Being a Teacher	181
	Dorota Werbińska	
16	<i>Teacher Presence and Classroom Awareness: On the Nature of Critical Incidents in Foreign Language Instruction</i>	197
	Danuta Gabryś-Barker	
17	Foreign Language Teacher Burnout: A Research Proposal	211
	Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel	

Part V Staking Out New Territories in Second Language Acquisition Research

- 18 Away from the Input: Affordance as a Way of Activating Personal Touch to Language Learning** 227
Hadrian Lankiewicz
- 19 Cognitive Linguistics and Foreign Language Pedagogy: An Overview of Recent Trends and Developments** 241
Jakub Bielak
- 20 Across the Borders of Typhlopedagogy and SLA: New Research Problems, Recent Findings, Perspectives** 263
Małgorzata Jedynek
- 21 New Perspectives in Language Assessment: The Interpretivist Revolution** 275
Edyta Wajda

Part VI Methodological Issues in Research on Second Language Learning and Teaching

- 22 Mix? Yes, but How? Mixed Methods Research Illustrated** 289
Danuta Głównka
- 23 Reconstructive Elicited Imitation as a Tool for Measuring Implicit L2 Knowledge** 301
Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak
- 24 Some Methodological Issues in Second-Language Speech Research: Participant Selection and Experimental Design** 317
Arkadiusz Rojczyk
- 25 Crossing Frontiers in the Think Aloud on Reading: Revealing Text-Recounting Method Effect** 327
Anna Konieczna

Introduction

Research on learning and teaching second and foreign languages represents an very rapidly developing and vibrant field, which is evidenced by the multitude of conferences, journals, edited collections and monographs dealing with various aspects of these complex phenomena. In fact, the amount of professional literature is so vast that it is only possible to become acquainted with the most important publications, which inevitably leads to the need for specialization in specific areas, but even in such cases reading everything that is published on a particular topic often poses a formidable challenge. Research of this kind is also highly multidisciplinary, drawing upon advances in such disciplines as linguistics, psychology, neurology, sociology, ethnography or general education, as well as such subdisciplines thereof as psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, or pragmatics, to name but a few. This, in turn, is responsible for the great diversity of the endeavor, with specialists adopting sometimes disparate perspectives with a view to explaining the process of language acquisition as well as the factors shaping it. Subsequently, they apply the insights gained in these ways to second and foreign language pedagogy, which involves addressing issues ranging from teachers' classroom practices, through learners' involvement in their own learning, to important aspects of educational policy. The field is also in a constant state of flux triggered by advances in the disciplines and subdisciplines underlying it, with the effect that specialists are continually seeking new ways of gaining insights into how languages are acquired and used, as well as conducting studies aimed at determining how learning and teaching of foreign languages can most beneficially be enhanced.

The present edited volume constitutes a valuable addition to these lines of inquiry in that it contains a selection of papers reflecting cutting-edge developments in the field of second and foreign language learning and instruction in a variety of contexts. The contributions are divided into six parts, each devoted to a particular theme and grouping papers in accordance with their focus rather than alphabetical order. The first part, entitled *Researching teachers' classroom practices* includes five texts reporting the findings of research projects focusing upon the impact

of specific instructional options on the acquisition of target language skills and subsystems. The first three of these deal with teaching grammar, with Agnieszka Pietrzykowska looking at the effectiveness of visual input enhancement, Anna Broszkiewicz appraising the value of the use of focused communication tasks and Aleksandra Wach exploring teachers' choices in this area. Melanie Ellis, in turn, sets out to verify the contribution of the task-based approach to the development of speaking skills, while Liliana Piasecka investigates the ways in which English teachers draw upon Internet-based resources in preparing their lessons. The second part of the book revolves around pragmatic, cultural and sociolinguistic aspects of language acquisition. Accordingly, Paweł Sobkowiak addresses the feasibility of developing intercultural competence in business English classes and the ways in which this can be done, Marek Derenowski examines the place of target language culture in teaching materials, Agata Klimczak ponders over the norms of politeness which should be taught to learners, David Singleton provides insights into the linguistic and cultural experiences of Poles in Ireland, and Bartosz Wolski sets out to evaluate the potential of American Studies websites. In the subsequent part of the volume, which contains three papers, attention is shifted to individual variation in learning and teaching foreign languages, with Adriana Biedroń exploring the interface between intelligence and aptitude in gifted second language learners, Bashir Khan and Zafar Iqbal Khattak focusing on anxiety as a cause of problems in language learning in Pakistan, and Mirosław Pawlak investigating the relationship between foreign language anxiety and the use of language learning strategies. Part Four, *Teachers in second language education*, deals with teacher training, the problems that practitioners may face in their classrooms, as well as difficulties afflicting the profession in the long run. In the four contributions included in this section, Dorota Potocka traces the evolution of paradigms of teacher training, Dorota Werbińska uses the narratives of novice teachers to illustrate their experiences and perceptions, Danuta Gabryś-Barker emphasizes the significance of critical incidents in the foreign language classroom, and Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel elucidates the concept of teacher burnout and proposes how it could be investigated in the Polish context. The last two parts of the book, entitled *Staking out new territories in second language acquisition research* and *Methodological issues in research on second language learning and teaching*, point to new directions in empirical investigations, both in terms of research foci and the tools that can be employed to tap into the processes of language learning and language instruction. In the former, Hadrian Lankiewicz provides the rationale for focusing on the concept of affordances rather than input, Jakub Bielak demonstrates how developments in cognitive linguistics can serve as a point of reference for language pedagogy, Małgorzata Jedynek presents the latest research findings concerning teaching languages to visually impaired learners, and Edyta Wajda provides an account of new trends in language assessment. In the four articles included in the latter, in turn, Danuta Główska illustrates the principles of mixed-methods research and demonstrates how it can be applied to the investigation of the social dimension of language learning, Anna Mystkowska-Wiertelak advocates the employment of reconstructive elicited imitation as a measure of implicit knowledge, Arkadiusz Rojczyk

focuses on issues related to participant selection and experimental design in second language speech research, and Anna Konieczna shows how the use of different varieties of think aloud protocols can affect research findings.

Because of its scope, the diversity of topics covered and the adoption of various theoretical perspectives, the volume will be of interest to theorists and researchers who may find in it inspiration for empirical investigations of different aspects of learning and teaching second and foreign languages. It is at the same time likely to be a source of important information and a point of reference for methodologists, materials designers and practitioners willing to improve the quality of classroom instruction. Finally, it can prove to be useful in courses for graduate and postgraduate students, directing their attention at possible lines of inquiry and aiding them in making the right methodological choices when designing and conducting their own studies.

Mirosław Pawlak

Notes on Contributors

Adriana Biedroń received her doctoral degree in applied linguistics from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 2003. She is an Assistant Professor in English Philology Department at the Pomeranian Academy in Słupsk. Her fields of interest include applied psycholinguistics and second language acquisition theory. Her research focuses on individual differences in SLA, in particular, cognitive and personality factors in gifted L2 learners.

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Anna Broszkiewicz is a teacher at the Teacher Training College, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She graduated from this University with an MA in linguistics in 2004. Her research interests are second language acquisition and teaching English as a foreign language.

Marek Derenowski has been an active teacher for about sixteen years. After graduating from Teacher Training College in Konin, he started teaching there as a methodology teacher. Ten years ago Teacher Training College changed into the State School of Higher Professional Education. For three years he was the director of the Language Department and now he works there as a lecturer. Five years ago he started working at Adam Mickiewicz University in Kalisz. His PhD was completed in 2004 and it concerned the teacher journal as a means of developing reflectivity.

Melanie Ellis teaches practical English and methodology at the Foreign Language Teaching Training College in Zabrze, Poland. She holds a PhD from the University of Warsaw and an MSc in Applied Linguistics from the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests include the development of fluency and task-based teaching and learning.

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Danuta Główka, MA is employed at the Teacher Training College in Leszno. Her principal fields of interests include sociolinguistics, historical linguistics, and descriptive grammar. Her pedagogical experience at the teacher training college combined with her theoretical interests in linguistics induced her to do research in applied linguistics. She is currently working on a doctoral thesis on the relationship between learner social factors and foreign language learning outcomes.

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Mirosław Pawlak is Professor of English in the English Department at the Faculty of Pedagogy and Fine Arts of Adam Mickiewicz University in Kalisz, Poland. His main areas of interest are SLA theory and research, form-focused instruction, classroom discourse, learner autonomy, communication and learning strategies, individual learner differences and pronunciation teaching. His recent publications include *The Place of Form-Focused Instruction in the Foreign Language Classroom* (2006, Kalisz–Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University Press) and several edited collections on learner autonomy, language policies of the Council of Europe, form-focused instruction and individual learner differences.

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Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel teaches EFL methodology and SLA courses at Opole University where is employed as Professor of English. She specializes in the role of affect in foreign language acquisition. Her interests also concern special educational needs (e.g. developmental dyslexia or autism).

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