

# **Language, Learning and Teaching**

**Edited by  
Siu-Lun Lee  
Victoria Tuzlukova**

**Athens Institute for Education and Research  
2011**



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# Chapter 1

## Language, Learning and Teaching: An Introduction

Siu-lun Lee, The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong  
Victoria Tuzlukova, Sultan Qaboos University, Oman

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This book entitled Language Learning and Teaching includes selected papers presented at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual International Conference on Philology, Literatures and Linguistics, 12-15 July 2010, at the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Education, 24-27 May 2010, at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Literature, Languages & Linguistics, 11-14 July 2011 and at the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual International Conference on Education, 23-26 May 2011.

Language, learning and teaching have always been in focus of research. However, in spite of the accumulated experience and knowledge, there is still a lack of concentration on the different areas related to the field with regard to the local educational contexts. The central purpose of the book is to feature the latest research findings and topical developments in language learning and teaching across the curricula and around the world. The book also harnesses enthusiasm and passion for language research and language teaching profession.

There are five parts in this book. Part I addresses the issues related to language learning strategies and language teaching pedagogy. Titled Language learning and teaching strategies this part includes seven papers that examine instructional and learning styles, communication, listening comprehension and motivational strategies in language learning and teaching. All of these issues are discussed taking in consideration both challenges shared by all language teachers in global educational environment and those faced in local educational contexts. The following paragraphs describe in brief the focus of each paper included in this part.

The first paper in this part Specific aptitude for foreign language – musical intelligence explores a correlation between musical aptitude and perception, and production of some aspects of the foreign language phonetic features. The author of this paper Jerzy Zybert from the University of Warsaw and the Academy Management in Lodz, Warsaw Division, fPoland, addresses musical intelligence and regards it as an important factor in the language classroom. In the author's assessment, musically smart students are better foreign language learners, and musically non-gifted ones who get musical training do improve their learning capacity.

In the paper Phonological awareness of learners of English as an L3 Surabhi Bharati from The English and Foreign Languages University in India, examines a complex issue of cross-linguistic influence in third language

acquisition. The author speculates on the number of factors that are associated with it and their possible interaction. It is pointed out that the study of cross-linguistic influence is affected not only by the knowledge of other languages but also by the process of acquiring those languages, and the strategies the learner used to acquire them. This paper also raises certain issues of the metalinguistic awareness of sub syllabic unit - an area which is still in its infancy. In the opinion of the author, trilinguals or multilinguals have more instances of task accuracy than bilinguals and therefore have more metalinguistic awareness of subsyllabic units.

Paper by Sarah H.J. Liu from Newcastle University, UK is titled “*Listening comprehension strategies and learning style in foreign language learning.*” The author of the paper firstly reviews the dynamic aspects of the listening comprehension and the cognitive styles underlying the information processing in terms of how L2 knowledge is processed, stored, and retrieved, and then reports the results of listening strategy use by two proficiency levels of listeners and their leafzyrning styles. She contends that for strategy-use investigations in the L2/FL classroom, there might be a recent urge to train less proficient learners who would learn the strategies from more proficient ones to enhance or acquire specific skills in the target language. The author of the paper also comments on the non-participatory (or one-way) listening strategy use that restricts to the metacognitive and cognitive strategies rather than social/affective strategies. Therefore, she recommends that the participatory listening should be conducted to explore a relationship between the social and affective strategies, listening ability, and cognitive style.

Kiriakí Palapanidi from the University Antonio de Nebrija and María Pilar Agustín Llach from the University of La Rioja in Spain in their paper *Lexical errors in the written compositions of Greek students of Spanish* explore the evolution of lexical intralingual formal errors in their attempt to determine the causes of greatest difficulty in different foreign language proficiency levels. This paper has interesting insights into the authors’ understanding of the lexical intralingual formal errors and their categories. Of special interest is the category of errors which are generated by the creation of nonexistent words in the target language. The authors stress the active role of learners in the process of acquisition of the vocabulary in a foreign language and exemplify it by the fact that students tend to use this communicative strategy in the cases of lack of lexical knowledge.

Communication strategies used by successful and less successful adult learners is the title of the paper by Szu-Ling Tseng and Ya-Li Lai from Taipei Municipal University of Education in Taiwan. In their paper the authors include the content that fosters understanding of communication, communicative competence, communicative strategies and communicative language teaching. The authors argue that to reveal EFL learners’ use of strategies for oral communication is a crucial task, especially in the need of investigation of Chinese EFL learners. The authors strongly believe that teachers should strive to emphasize meaning rather than functions of the language for the purpose of communication. Moreover, according to them,

when teaching communication strategies, the material for the task should be adapted to suit students with different English language levels and interests. The authors make it clear that the relationship between communication strategies and other language skills, such as listening, reading, and writing, should be further investigated and explored.

In the paper *Motivational strategies for Greek teachers of English as a Foreign Language* Charoula Gkioka from Lancaster University, UK discusses the concept of motivation in the context of foreign language acquisition from both research view and personal reflective experience in the Greek context. According to the author, three areas are possible for enhancing the effectiveness of L<sub>2</sub> learning and acquisition, namely the development of motivational strategies that can generate and maintain learners' motivation; the formation of self-motivating strategies that can lead to autonomous and creative learners in the language classroom and the study of teacher motivation in terms of their motivational characteristics, teaching methodology, etc. Considering the application of these in the Greek context, the author points out that a range of self-motivating strategies in combination with a cross-curricular approach and enhanced Greek teachers' motivation could enhance both the learning process and students' motivation.

The last paper in Part I by Chiung-Wen Chang from National Changhua University of Education in Taiwan is entitled *Exploring the relationship between Taiwanese college students' perceived instructional styles and their self-determination*. It examines the relationship between teachers' instructional styles and students' self-determination. The author raises certain concerns that most of the previous studies on learners' role in their language learning mainly focus on Western learners, so the result about the relationships between teachers' instructional styles and students' self-determination may not be suitable to be generalized to students in Asian educational settings. Therefore, the author discusses the results of an empirical study that investigated teachers' major instructional styles from the Asian learners' perceptions in the Freshman English class. In the author's opinion teacher's controlling instructional style is still needed for students' classroom learning since it might guide them, especially low English achievers, to make decisions in their own learning. However, according to the author, both teachers' autonomy-supportive and controlling instructional styles benefit Asian students' self-determination. Therefore, the author believes that teachers might need to vary their instructional styles in class.

Part II of the book titled *Sociolinguistics and language teaching* addresses cultural, social and linguistic factors that influence foreign language teaching and learning. Some of these factors are specific to some educational settings; others are universal.

In the first paper in this part, *Cultural, Iconic and linguistics determinants used in the discourse of advertising in Spanish in the US. Implications and Consequences of Learning Spanish as a Second Language*, Hilda Velásquez from Angelo State University, USA addresses the perspective based on the study of messages that marketers, advertisers and publicists transmit to

Hispanics in the United States toward the advertising in Spanish. This perspective makes it possible to the author to identify the impact of socio-cultural factors on teaching Spanish as a second language. The author asserts that media, advertisers, and news organizations that play a decisive and enormous educational role in the appreciation of Spanish as a second language in the U.S. are unaware of this role. Therefore, the author recommends certain actions necessary for media and advertising professionals to consider, for example, participation in more public forums to promote the proper use of Spanish in advertising and media.

In their paper *Culture Integration into Foreign Language Teaching: Fostering Identities and Transcending Boundaries* Rahma Al-Mahrooqi and Victoria Tuzlukova from Sultan Qaboos University in Oman trace the journey of culture integration into the foreign language classroom and address its most prominent aspects. They also address the unique situation of English language teaching and the dilemma of which culture to teach since English is now the lingua franca of the world. According to the authors, EFL classrooms can be the forum for culture learning. They believe that integrating culture by juxtaposing the foreign language culture, students' native culture and other world cultures can help students to improve their language and to acquire communicative and pragmatic competence, which is the main goal of language teaching and learning.

The third paper in this part *What are metaphors telling us? Revealing language learners' beliefs through metaphors* is contributed by Julide Inozu and Seden Tuyan from Cukurova University in Turkey. This insightful paper starts with a quotation from Tom Anderson, "Success begins with an educator's cultivation of the ability to identify the students' preconceptions, and to *discover the seeds from which knowledge can grow.*" Acknowledging the importance of learners' beliefs about language learning, the authors focus on several areas, namely (1) nature of language learning, (2) difficulty of language learning, (3) aptitude for language learning, (4) learning strategies, (5) motivation to learn English, (6) role of teachers, and (7) attitudes towards English. In the authors' opinion searching learner beliefs and, at the same time, building up our teaching on those, are critical in the learning process.

The last paper in Part II is an account that addresses Multiculturalism in English learning and teaching in Taiwan: A critical discourse analysis. This paper is contributed by Yuhshi Lee, Wenzao Ursulline, Chia Chou and Yi-Ching Hsie from Wenzao Ursulline College of Language in Taiwan. According to the authors, studies concerning the implementation of multicultural English curriculum within schools primarily focus on the macro-level and how policy is enacted from the top-down. Acknowledging the importance of a micro-context perspective and applying critical discourse analysis, the authors examine how multiculturalism plays out in two undergraduate courses from a micro-context of school and classroom practice. Their findings show that the multicultural English language materials consist of materials that present Anglo-American cultures; they play an important part in the constitution of the students' view of the world and cultures. Therefore, they argue that the

incorporation of multicultural curricula within English language learning courses in Taiwan should not be an extension of America ways, values, and images, but a representation of the world's dynamicity and multiculturalism. Thus, in their opinion, with English being increasingly used in global contexts, English is gaining a different identity as it is no longer exclusively represented by the American discourse. The authors, therefore, strongly believe that to become a participant within the current diverse and global community, English language learners, teachers, and policymakers in Taiwan should all partake in the transformation and reconstruction of a multicultural English language.

The theme of Part III, "Linguistic Research and Second Language Acquisition," is closely interconnected with the theme of the previous part.

This part starts with the paper New prototypes of syllable structure for teaching/learning Portuguese by **Sara Candeias and Fernando Perdigão** from University of Coimbra in Portugal. In this paper the authors examine Portuguese Syllable (PS) as an intermediary level between words and phones that can serve as a consistent linguistic tool to explore complementary methodologies of teaching and learning Portuguese. In their clear and lucid presentation the PS structure, the authors identify "syllable structure" as a linguistically descriptive unit definitely useful for information processing and allowing an immediate procedure to the lexicon access. According to them, there is a certain potential of using statistical information methods to improve the PS specifications used for the process of teaching/learning Portuguese language. This potential is underlined by the work reported in their paper.

*Non-native Students' Problems in Structuring Argumentative Essays in English at Tertiary Level* is the title of the paper contributed by Monta Farneste from University of Latvia, Latvia. The author focuses on the importance of mastering genres at tertiary level to develop academic discourse expertise. She brings to the readers' attention the fact that there are contradictory findings regarding similarities and differences in academic writing between English-speaking countries, on the one hand, and other cultures. Additionally, the author points out that there is little research done concerning the problems in structuring tertiary level essays written by NNS (non-native speakers) in Latvia. In her paper the author addresses the problems that tertiary level students face in structuring argumentative essays. She also traces essay writing traditions in different cultures, and investigates cultural influences and rhetorical structure in academic essay writing.

Gülten Gençoğlu and Yunus Emre Akbana from Kahramanmaraş Sütçü İmam niversity in Turkey are the authors of the next paper, which is titled Second language acquisition of English reflexive and referring pronouns by Turkish university prep-class students. The ultimate purpose of the study discussed in this paper is to render the positive effect of explicit training about English reflexive and referring pronouns on Turkish university prep-class students. According to the authors of this paper second language acquisition has grasped the attention of a great number of academics all over the world. In particular, they mention a substantial amount of obstacles non-native speakers of English undergo throughout the process of acquisition of the target

language. English language learners in Turkey, in their opinion, are not an exception. To quote their words, “Among the difficulties that Turkish pre-class students encounter, the differences between English and Turkish within the scope of reflexive and referring pronouns come to the stage.” To overcome these difficulties, the authors suggest that English lecturers should act as the main source and facilitator of the comprehension of the focused grammatical component.

A study on influence of Russian as L1 on the learning of the copula BE in present simple tense in English is the title of the next paper. Its contributors are Elena Anotonova Ünlü from University of London, UK and Çiler Hatipoğlu from Middle East Technical University, Turkey. The authors explore whether native speakers of Russian encounter any difficulties in the acquisition of the copula be and, if they do, they attempt to uncover plausible reasons for these difficulties. Their paper starts with a brief review of the literature discussing cross-linguistic influences, and, then, focuses on the discussion of the copula be as a learning problem. These two parts are followed by the methodology (description of the participants, the methods of data collection and analysis), the results and discussion, and conclusion sections of the study. The findings of the study conducted by the authors of this paper support the view of Hyams (1994), White (2002), Herschensohn (2000) (cited in White 2003: 190-195) who argue that the properties of L<sub>1</sub> grammar have effects on the realization of L<sub>2</sub> morphology and make a point that “morphology must be learned. That is morphological paradigm must gradually be added to the lexicon, just like words. More abstract syntactic properties, on the other hand, do not require learning” (White, 2003: 194).

The last paper in this part Locative Prepositions and Their Role in Second Language Acquisition by Gunel Mammadova from Aristotle University of Thessaloniki in Greece is an account that addresses child acquisition to see how “universal” spatial concepts actually are. According to the author, traditional approaches to locative acquisition take as their starting point the fact that the meanings of locatives are composed of a number of components or attributes which contribute to the overall meaning and functions of a locative. They also originate from the general belief that some spatial concepts are universal, i.e. all languages encode these concepts. The author notes that whatever form children’s non-linguistic spatial understanding may take, and in spite of the influence it exerts on the initial acquisition of spatial terms, this understanding must eventually be applied to adapting their “conceptual packing of space” to spatial organization in their native language.

Modern computer and communication technologies have undoubtedly had a pivotal effect on language learning and teaching. Any comprehensive discussion on the account of language, learning and teaching, is, therefore, incomplete if these issues are not addressed. Part IV Technology and Language Teaching addresses the areas of computer assisted language learning and teaching, virtual learning communities, and internet tools and services.

Part IV starts with the paper *Prospective EFL teachers’ field experience in an online support community*. In this paper its author Mei-hui Liu from Tunghai University, R.O.C. gives a historical perspective of the use of



computer-mediated communication (CMC) in promoting online teacher professional development. The author's aim is to further uncover the nature and development of online community members' interactions, discussions, and negotiation of meanings. According to the author, the employment of online learning communities may foster pre service teacher education. The development in online communications may also reduce temporal and spatial barriers and allow pre-service teachers to communicate with others, especially when they are placed in disparate geographical locations.

The title of the next paper is The perceptions of English language teaching students on ELT websites. It was contributed by Bedir Hasan from Cukurova University and Ates Ozdemir Emsal from Mersin University in Turkey. The authors discuss the role of technology, with its interactive software, Web-based study, and rich resources and materials, as a motivating tool for communicative language teaching. They also explore the role of the teachers as technology extends the communicative classroom to provide authentic tasks and audiences for English language learners locally and globally. (Butler-Pascoe and Wiburg, 2003: 47) According to the authors, this role is essential. They share their belief that teachers should be good guides for students to access ELT websites which are suitable for their needs. The authors contend that this means extra work apart from class work. However, in their opinion, when students learn how to reach and make use of the information they need, they will become lifelong learners.

The last chapter in this part was contributed by Bahman Gorjian from Islamic Azad University in Iran. Its title is The role of computer in instructing writing skills in SLA. The author contends that computer technology has had a great impact on language teaching and learning as a facilitative device and as a popular component in educational curricula. In the paper the author explores whether using computer e-mailing can enhance EFL students' writing abilities. The author focuses on using e-mails as on line software which helps learners do excessive drills in spelling and grammar activities and generally in the writing tasks. According to the author, computer e-mailing helps the teachers who run essay writing courses to implement a multimedia project. It can also motivate students and provide teachers with additional tools to correct recurrent grammatical errors, therefore, enhancing writing instruction essay writing classrooms.

Part V that concludes the book is titled "Evaluation of Language Programs." It addresses the problems of language programs design, creation, assessment and successful implementation.

This part starts with the paper Implementing successful dual-immersion bilingual programs by Anne K. Soderman from 3e International School in China and Michigan State University, USA. The author of this paper asserts that bilingual instruction that takes the form of dual immersion to support both languages equally appears to be the most effective model to become fluent in a language. This assertion is supported by an example of 3e International School in China. To quote the author, "The model at 3e International School is one of awarding equal and separate status to both Mandarin and English. Neither one is treated as a second language." The author describes how the school model

was conceptualized, and appropriate age was implemented. This description is followed by the discussion of teacher observation, training and support. The author contends that effective teachers are the key to high quality educational programs, and all school systems seek the very best teachers possible. In addition, the author explores the role of parent involvement, assessment and research. The author concludes the paper with some recommendations for successful implementation of dual-immersion bilingual programs.

In the next paper titled The ESL classroom assistant program Roberta Devlin-Scherer from Seton Hall University, USA addresses teaching second language learners as a growing concern across all subject fields. From the point of view of the author, pre-service ESL teachers need information to offer support and encouragement, practical activities that will help their students grasp challenging content, and techniques for increasing access to the content without minimizing the level of the material. Therefore, the author explores the ESL classroom assistant program as a way for the pre-service teachers to observe and practice and as a career path opportunity. She also suggests finding ways to ingrate cross-disciplinary knowledge and exposing secondary education students to more targeted strategies in the general methods class.

Part Y concludes with an insightful paper The Problems within the Process of Foreign Language Teaching in Turkish Primary Education System by Erten Gökçe from Ankara University and Berna Köseoğlu from Kocaeli University in Turkey. The authors explore the problems within the process of teaching English as a foreign language in Turkish primary education system. They also examine the most effective methods and techniques of learning and teaching a foreign language. The authors place specific emphasis on teachers, parent involvement, new methods and activities. They also discuss the need for cooperation with the educational institutions in other countries so as to compete with the new technological and educational developments, to share knowledge and practices, to create an environment in which lifelong foreign language learning comes to the fore.

Given above was a concise description of the papers in all five parts of the book. The potential contribution of this book is likely to be to linguistics, language teaching and learning, by comprehensively presenting and covering issues of language pedagogy across practices and perspectives around the globe. Working on this book was a very interesting and valuable experience for both editors. We would like to thank all the contributors and colleagues from international academic community for their invaluable help in reviewing some of the chapters. Our special gratitude is due to Dr. Feyza Doyran, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Bahçeşehir University, Turkey, Dr. Mohammed Nasser Alhuqbani Al-Dossari, Assistant Professor of Applied Linguistics/Psycholinguistics, The Department of Languages & Translation, Chair, King Fahd Security College, Saudi Arabia, Chinaka S. DomNwachukwu, Ph.D., Professor of Multicultural Education, Chair, Department of Teacher Education, School of Education, Azusa Pacific University, USA and Georgeta Rata, Assistant/Associate Professor at the Banat University of Agricultural Science and Veterinary Medicine, Romania.

