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Book Review

Second Language Acquisition: A Theoretical Introduction to Real World Applications, by Alessandro Benati and Tanja Angelovska, London, Bloomsbury, 2016, 200 pp., £84.00 (Hardcover), ISBN: 978-5671-0449-6

Second language acquisition (SLA) has received much attention as researchers looked for answers of how language should be learned and taught. Understanding how language is acquired is the focus of many efforts that seek to help second or foreign language teachers find the most effective ways to teach the language. One outcome of these efforts is the book: *Second Language Acquisition: A Theoretical Introduction to Real World Applications* by Alessandro Benati and Tanja Angelovska. The book provides a comprehensive overview of second language research and theories related to second language acquisition. These theories are linked to real-world applications allowing the book's intended audiences to not only understand the theoretical perspectives but also applying them to the language teaching and learning practices.

The book consisted of six chapters, all of which explain important aspects of second language teaching and learning. Each chapter consists of a short summary of the topic, a theoretical part with representations of current theories and research, activities to check the readers' understanding, and finally implications to link the knowledge gained to real-world applications. The chapters organization allows readers to make connections to the texts and provide better understanding of the examined topics.

In Chapter 1, the authors provide an extensive introduction to second language acquisition, including a presentation of several definitions of SLA, a description of theories around language acquisition, an identification of the SLA key elements and issues, and finally a demonstration of practical implications related to second language teaching and learning. The chapter answers essential questions such as: How language is acquired? what do learners need to acquire the language? What factors affect language acquisition?

Chapter 2 offers an insight into the similarities and differences between first and second language acquisition. This overview is based on the theoretical perspectives of leading scholars' work in the field of first and second language acquisition such as *Universal Grammar* by Avram Noam Chomsky (Chomsky, 2006) and *Critical period hypothesis* (Lenneberg, 1967) by Eric H. Lenneberg. Also, the authors discussed the misconceptions that associated with age as an important factor in first and second language acquisition. For instance, in some theories that explain second language acquisition (e.g., *Critical Period Hypotheses*), age is a critical factor in second language learning. That is, younger learners can learn the language better than older learners. This is not always true as the authors explain that other factors should be considered such as the learning environment and the social and cultural interactions with others.

Chapter 3 explores information processing in second language acquisition and answers the question: "How learners process information in second language acquisition?" The authors analyzed different types of input (such as authentic language, interactions with others, learning and teaching environments) that language learners are exposed to when learning a second language, and highlighted the importance of understanding the learners' individual differences and how they affect language acquisition.

Chapter 4 and 5 cover the development of the internal system in second language and the communication aspect of SLA respectively. Chapter 4 seeks to answer the question: “How the internal system develops in a second language?” The chapter discusses the role of interlanguage in acquiring the second language. According to the authors, interlanguage is a system of language learning which can be influenced by features of L1 and L2 language and cognitive factors such as language transfer and over-generalization. Moreover, in chapter 5, the authors answer the question: “how learners learn to communicate in a second language?” The chapter focuses on understanding the communicative skills that language learners need to acquire the language, which include linguistic (e.g., grammar, phonology, syntax), socio-linguistic (e.g., efficient communication, using the right words and expressions), and socio-cultural skills (e.g., knowledge of social and cultural life, identify cultural difference, cultural identity).

Finally, chapter 6 provides an extended review of what we know about SLA. In the chapter, the authors review several concepts related to SLA such as input, language interaction, implicit and explicit knowledge, and teaching approaches. This review is significant because it helps readers form a clear picture of many issues and concerns surrounding SLA such as how language is learned and taught and the influence of environment in language acquisition.

It is regrettable, however, that some important questions about SLA remain unanswered. For instance, the book does not cover some critical areas (e.g., language development in the digital age, the role of digital culture, the use technology in first/second language learning and teaching) that could lead to a better understanding of first/second language acquisition in today’s digital world. Discussing these topics would have answered many important questions in language acquisition such as: what is the effect of this new digital reality for language acquisition and the development of other human skills? What is the role of digital environment in understanding how language are learned and taught? Can new technologies be used to bridge the gap between theories and practices in terms of supporting learners’ needs? Can new technologies be used to support learners’ growth and enhance language learning?

Overall, this book is a beneficial source for understanding the theoretical perspectives behind first and second language acquisitions. The book provides both an extensive theoretical framework and practical implications that help answer questions and address key issues related to second language acquisition. As such, the book is a beneficial and helpful resource for undergraduate students, in-service and prospective teachers who seek to identify the most effective way to learn and teach a language. The significance of the book also lays in examining SLA from different perspectives, allowing readers to understand key issues of SLA comprehensively. More importantly, the authors succeed in providing its readers with practical guidelines that link research and theories with real-world teaching and learning applications.

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