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Book Review

Intercultural Foreign Language Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Contexts, by P. Romanowski and E. Bandura (Eds.), Hershey, PA, IGI Global, 2019, 323 pp., \$140.00, ISBN 9781522581284

Learning a second language (L2) provides a pathway to explore other worldviews and cultural values. However, most L2 learners cannot reach high levels of proficiency due to the lack of opportunities to reinforce what they have learned. Previous L2 studies have shown that if students have no opportunity to apply their knowledge, they forget over 50% of what they have learned within the first 24 hours, and 80% after a week (Gallon, 2016). Even those who achieve high scores in language assessment may not be fluent enough for intercultural communications, because most language textbooks focus on linguistic accuracy, rather than sociolinguistic rules. The gap between textbook discourse and authentic conversation prevents many students from applying what they have learned into practice (Gilmore, 2007).

Addressing the above concerns, in this edited collection, Romanowski and Bandura adopted a sociocultural approach to learn and acquire L2 in multifaceted contexts through exploring different topics, such as L2 learning in multicultural classrooms, teacher education, L2 and telecommunication and virtual collaboration platforms. The learning cultures are highlighted as a key for linking L2 learning to practice. The book is comprised of 12 chapters written by language researchers based on their empirical research or first-hand professional experience. The authors not only come from English-speaking countries, but also from Eastern Europe, South America and East Asia. Their diverse backgrounds and experiences offer a global view of second/foreign language learning and addresses the concerns from both the teacher's and learner's perspectives.

The chapters are organized in three sections. Section 1, titled "Challenges of Intercultural Encounters and Foreign Language Education", begins with a chapter by Éva Csillik, who shares her English teaching experience in a multicultural/multilingual classroom where a lingua franca is necessary to enable classroom communication. Chapter 2 provides a student's perspective through examining the L2 learning processes of 258 Syrian refugees in Turkey. The role of L2 learning is highlighted as the key to successful sociocultural adjustment, which brings benefits to both asylum seekers and the host community. Chapter 3 also focuses on the learner's view by examining how students dealt with intercultural clashes in their online communication. This chapter reveals the language differences in perceived norms of politeness between university staff and students. A seldom-researched issue, the gap between textbook language and authentic conversations in daily life, is also highlighted. The fourth chapter takes a more comprehensive view by explaining how culturally-based factors affect students' cross-/intercultural communication in different contexts. The author also makes profound suggestions about how students and teachers can develop cultural awareness.

Section 2 focuses on curriculum development and gives suggestions for improving L2 intercultural learning. This section begins with Chapter 5, "Intercultural Language Teaching in an Era of Internationalization," which explains the conceptual difference between internationalization and internationalism. The author argues that L2 learning in university is not simply for seeking better career opportunities, but also for receiving an education in global values. It encourages students to have more international interactions to develop their intercultural competence. Chapter 6 uses a narrative approach

(learning from critical incidents) to stimulate students' critical reflection, so that they can function well in unpredictable situations. Chapter 7 continues the focus on critical incidents in L2 learning, where the author makes a detailed comparison between the essentialist and non-essentialist approaches to teaching the language-culture connection. Chapter 8 focuses on recent technology advancements, where the author reported findings from two intercultural tele-collaborative projects and described how students set up an online community for English learning and culture sharing.

Section 3 is based on the authors' experience and empirical studies of teacher training programmes. It begins with the sharing of Christopher Brighton and his colleagues, who highlighted the importance and limitations of promoting intercultural competence at the university level. This is echoed by Azamat Akbarov's study in Chapter 10, which underscores the importance of building intercultural competence when teaching foreign language communication. Akbarov considers this competence as the key to overcome the cultural and cognitive differences between L2 and native language speakers. Addressing the above concerns, Chapters 11 and 12 aim at helping students communicate with linguistically and culturally diverse students. Chapter 11 examines the effectiveness of a language course which incorporates a multicultural introduction to equip pre-service teachers with a higher level of intercultural sensitivity and multicultural attitudes. Chapter 12 shares the author's experience about how to introduce the teaching of intercultural pragmatics in a pre-service teacher training course.

This collection of 12 chapters offers a valuable resource for those who are interested in integrating L2 and cultural learning at the levels of curriculum-design and university-training. It provides a useful reference to university lecturers for fine-tuning their syllabuses in the area of intercultural competence and awareness as it showcased a variety of authentic teaching experiences from university lectures or multicultural classrooms. L2 learners at different levels can also benefit from reading the various examples of language uses in intercultural contexts. Moreover, this book is also valuable for new immigrants, pre-service teachers or social workers who are helping with the acculturation of new immigrants into host communities. All chapters reveal the important role that L2 cultures play in facilitating intercultural communication and avoiding clashes between cultures.

However, the book may not be very useful for teachers or students with homogeneous background, whose opportunities to intermingle with those outside their own culture are limited. Although the book provides good insights into classroom strategies needed for teaching L2 cultures, it appears to assume that students are motivated for learning L2 culture. Indeed, most learners in this book had strong integrative motivation for L2 learning: students in multicultural classrooms are motivated because their L2 proficiency and cultural knowledge helped them expand their social network; refugees are also motivated to learn because the lessons helped them survive in the hosting culture. However, such prerequisite motivation may not exist in culturally homogeneous classrooms or schools, such as those in Hong Kong where this reviewer is based. Yu and Downing (2012), for instance, found that Asian students reported a significantly higher level of instrumental motivation. They may not recognize the value of knowing intercultural matters. For the students who learn L2 with instrumental motivation, the book offered little insight on how to motivate them to learn L2 cultures.

In sum, this book makes a notable contribution to the field of intercultural communication and L2 learning. Language teachers and researchers who are interested in multicultural studies should enjoy reading it and find inspiration about L2 learning and culture from the many examples and insights from experience.

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