



## MLJ Reviews

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### MLJ Review Policy

The *MLJ* reviews books, monographs, computer software, and materials that (a) present results of research in—and methods of—foreign and second language teaching and learning; (b) are devoted to matters of general interest to members of the profession; (c) are intended primarily for use as textbooks or instructional aids in classrooms where foreign and second languages, literatures, and cultures are taught; and (d) convey information from other disciplines that relates directly to foreign and second language teaching and learning. Reviews not solicited by the *MLJ* can neither be accepted nor returned. Books and materials that are not reviewed in the *MLJ* cannot be returned to the publisher. Responses should be typed with double spacing and submitted electronically online at our ScholarOne Manuscripts address: <http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/mlj>.

### THEORY AND PRACTICE

BIGELOW, MARTHA H. *Mogadishu on the Mississippi: Language, Racialized Identity, and Education in a New Land*. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. Pp. xii, 189. \$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-4443-3874-4.

In this volume Bigelow recounts her 5-year research engagement with the Somali diaspora community in Minnesota, with a focus on Somali youth's abysses of experience of hybrid and multiple identity construction. As the title suggests, it is interdisciplinary research that crosses the fields of applied linguistics, second language acquisition, sociology, anthropology, and education. This interdisciplinarity enables the researcher not only to explore the complex object of her inquiry but also to influence the direction of future research.

This book consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 provides an overview by introducing the Somali diaspora and other key constructs discussed in the book, including issues regarding advocacy-

integral research on identity and immigrant education. Chapter 2 discusses research in the area of orality and literacy among adolescents and adults in the diaspora community and addresses the lack of research in language education on multilingual individuals without formal education. Chapters 3 through 5 present three studies chronologically carried out with Somali adolescents to address the central theme of the book: how the Somali "youth are hybridizing and negotiating new identities that have very much to do with who they were, who their families are, and who they are hoping to become" (p. 10). Chapter 6 concludes the book with implications for educating Somali adolescent refugees, and the author calls for interdisciplinary research on language education for youth with limited formal education and print literacy, as well as engaged scholarship on the intertwined relationships of language, race, religion and gender in youth's identity construction in the third spaces.

The merits of this book lie in its focus on the immigrant adolescents that represent the most challenging school population in the United States. Given her involvement with the Somali community, Bigelow presents her understanding of these teens as a researcher and as their advocate. She leads readers to see that U.S. institutions are not prepared to effectively educate these adolescent refugees who are not only new to the English language, but also new to print literacy. But in turn, the institutions blame these teens for their "in-educationability" rather than acknowledging or examining their own problematic education system and practice. The interdisciplinary nature also makes this research stand out, which enables the researcher to analyze the complex experience these teens are tangled in from different perspectives. They are caught as other: between their home and community and their school, between oral and print literacy, between Somali American and African American. Through three separate studies, the author leads readers to understand the struggles these teens are going through in their adaptation to a world where English print is dominant and where they experience hostility towards their religion and disrespect of their

culture. Also, these teens are fighting not only against the mainstream oppression and stereotypes, but also against other minoritized groups. By integrating her research with advocacy, the author helps to “dismantle structural barriers in schooling, document the struggles and strengths of youth and their families and help educators be more effective both within and beyond the walls of academia” (p. 2).

However, there were three major questions pertaining to the research that I wish the author had discussed further. First, I question the word *Mogadishu* used in the book title. The word is mentioned only once (p. 113), and it is used as a slur by the police when addressing Somali children and youth. Though it is the capital of Somalia, once used as a slur, the word loses its original meaning. Second, in regard to the issue of being mistaken as other, the Somali youth do not like to be misidentified as African Americans. It is understandable that they dislike being misidentified as people they are not and do not want to be, but I am concerned that by not wanting to associate with African Americans because of their negative media image, they unintentionally ally themselves with the mainstream society in its discrimination of African Americans. I wish the author had addressed this issue and had assumed the role of advocate for all minoritized groups, as the research indicates that stereotypes and discriminations within minority groups are just as severe and damaging as those whites and people of color in U.S. society.

In addition, while reading the three case studies, I could hear the researcher’s voice, her critique and discontent with the education these teens are receiving, but I wish she had supported her claims better with data, particularly more context for how these teens are undereducated in U.S. schools. For instance, what was the learning context or curriculum for these teens? How much English language assistance did they receive? What subjects did they study at the high school level? What did their school experience look like? In short, I was looking for data that would show the inappropriateness of the education offered to these students.

These concerns notwithstanding, this book presents a powerful study. It pushes researchers and educators to think beyond their territories, examine their practices, and try to help the youth who need our support and assistance in their transition to our country.

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BOWLES, MELISSA A. *The Think-Aloud Controversy in Second Language Research*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Pp. 168. \$120.00, cloth; \$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-99483-5, cloth; 978-0-415-99484-2, paper.

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Bowles has produced a meta-analysis of the use of think-aloud protocols in second language acquisition (SLA) research. It will be useful to SLA researchers working in conversation analysis, as well as sociocultural and cognitive paradigms, all of which have an interest in verbalizations or inner (egocentric) speech. The book guides the reader through the historical use and challenges to the validity of think-aloud protocols, reviews a model from cognitive psychology, summarizes research findings from cognitive psychology and SLA, provides guidelines for data collection and analysis, and outlines directions for future research. The book’s organization and lucid prose are decidedly reader friendly.

Chapter 1 guides the reader through the history and controversy of think-aloud protocols from experimenter-provided verbalizations during the heyday of behaviorism through the shift to a focus on the cognition of the participants. The author notes that both retrospective and concurrent think-aloud protocols are generally accepted not only in SLA but also in medicine, anthropology, and other fields. In first language (L1) research, think-aloud protocols are used in studies of reading, writing, and language testing. In second language (L2) research, the think-aloud controversy emerged as differences over whether language production was the proper object of study or whether introspection might provide a complementary perspective on cognition. As the author points out, inference from production alone is risky. Think-aloud protocols are one way that researchers have found to corroborate production data. In L2 research, think-aloud protocols have been used in studies on reading, writing, translation, interlanguage pragmatics, conversational interaction, attention and awareness, and implicit and explicit knowledge. Retrospective think-aloud protocols, such as stimulated recall, are particularly useful in research on conversational interaction. Studies of attention and awareness have more typically made use of concurrent think-aloud protocols.

Chapter 2 introduces the challenges to the validity of think-aloud protocols. These challenges are defined in terms of reactivity. A think-aloud protocol is said to be reactive if it has an effect

on accuracy (veridicality) or on processing or solution time (latency). The main challenge to retrospective think-aloud protocols is their potential reactivity for veridicality. Stimulated recalls, a retrospective think-aloud protocol, attempt to address the veridicality issue by providing a stimulus, such as a replay of an interaction, to attenuate the effects of memory decay. The main challenge to concurrent think-aloud protocols, especially metacognitive tasks, is their potential reactivity for latency.

The predictive model used by Bowles is a typology proposed by Ericsson and Simon (1964, 1993). This model predicts that non-metacognitive verbalizations will be largely non-reactive, slowing processing only slightly. It predicts that metacognitive verbalizations may be more reactive, potentially slowing processing as well as altering cognitive processing. Bowles reviews a handful of studies of the reactivity of think-aloud protocols, among them the seminal work by Ericsson and Simon (1964, 1993), all of which tended to support the model. The meta-analysis revealed some effect for task type, suggesting that some tasks may be more compatible than others with think-aloud protocols. Most of the studies are from the field of cognitive psychology. They are, as Bowles points out, of limited relevance to SLA because they employed nonverbal or problem-solving tasks. Nevertheless, this analysis serves to acquaint the reader with the reactivity challenges to think-aloud protocols and raises the issue of the compatibility of certain tasks with think-aloud protocols.

Chapter 3 summarizes reactivity studies with verbal tasks from the field of SLA. Due to a lack of homogeneity it was impossible to provide a yes or no answer to the question of reactivity with think-aloud protocols, but a number of noteworthy trends emerged across studies. Think-aloud protocols were associated with facilitative effects on comprehension and receptive form learning, and a detrimental effect on productive form learning. There were small latency effects for grammar learning, reading, and metacognitive tasks. Bowles points to the need for further study to address the possible effects of learner proficiency, language of the task, and task type.

Chapter 4 presents recommendations for data collection in think-aloud protocols. Here the reader finds helpful advice on obtaining informed consent, pilot testing, instructions to research participants, warm-ups, online reminders, and checks on compatible task types.

Chapter 5 provides useful advice on transcribing and coding think-aloud data, accompanied by

examples. She urges review of transcriptions to ensure representativeness and insists on the importance of reporting inter-coder reliability.

Chapter 6 concludes the book with some of the more salient findings. Bowles notes that reactivity is not unidimensional, as it may either enhance or hinder performance. For example, non-metacognitive tasks were reactive for receptive form learning, but the effect was to enhance performance. This finding suggests that think-aloud protocols can be a source of learning. Reactivity with productive form learning, on the other hand, was detrimental to performance. Posttest differences tended to be insignificant, suggesting that think-aloud protocols can be used reliably. Bowles repeats her call for more research on factors such as type of report, learner proficiency, explicitness of instruction, and language of verbalization. She further notes that think-aloud protocols are better represented in reading than in writing research.

Bowles's advice is indispensable to researchers whose research may benefit from think-aloud protocols, and her recommendations are consistent with the data. For example, she urges caution in the use of think-aloud protocols given their reactivity with reading tasks. She also offers invaluable advice on the tasks and studies that are most compatible with the various types of think-aloud protocols. As a researcher who has never used a think-aloud protocol, I have gained a new appreciation of their utility.

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DÖRNYEI, ZOLTÁN, with TATSUYA TAGUCHI. *Questionnaires in Second Language Research: Construction, Administration, and Processing*. 2nd ed. New York: Routledge, 2010. Pp. xiv, 185. \$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-415-99820-8.

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Those who make use of questionnaires in second language (L2) research will find an invaluable resource in Dörnyei and Taguchi's work. As the authors point out, "in spite of the wide application of questionnaires in L2 research, there does not seem to be sufficient awareness in the profession about the theory of questionnaire design and processing" (p. xiii). This book goes a long way toward filling that gap.

The book opens with an introductory chapter pointing out what questionnaires are and are not, along with a thoughtful discussion of their

advantages and disadvantages. Next comes an extended chapter on questionnaire construction, attending to factors such as length, organization, and sampling of questionnaire content using multi-item scales. Particularly helpful are the sections on various types of closed-ended questionnaire items (including Likert scales, semantic differential scales, rank-order items, and multiple-choice items) and open-ended items (specific open questions, clarification questions, sentence completion items, and short-answer questions). Multiple examples of each of these item types are provided.

A unique feature of this chapter is the attention given to translating questionnaires into other languages, an issue that is routinely neglected. The authors point out the irony in the common practice of devoting significant time and resources to a questionnaire's construction but paying little attention to its translation into the language in which it will be administered. They suggest utilizing a committee comprised of individuals representing three separate roles—translators, reviewers, and adjudicators—to ensure that the translated questionnaire accurately communicates the intent of the original version.

Chapter 3 deals with questionnaire administration, including a discussion on methods of sampling and sample size, an up-to-date treatment of the advantages and disadvantages of paper-and-pencil, email, and online questionnaires, and helpful recommendations for increasing the quality and quantity of participant response in each of these types of questionnaires.

Chapter 4, which addresses the processing of questionnaire data, ironically contains both the greatest strengths and weaknesses of the book. A strong point is the detailed treatment of the analysis of quantitative data, including instructions on coding, keying in, and cleaning up the data, which I have not seen addressed in similar works. Included are discussions of the treatment of missing data, the correction of impossible or contradictory data, and the recoding of values from negatively worded questionnaire items. In contrast, the treatment of qualitative data is surprisingly short, with only one page devoted to the content analysis of open-ended questions and a conspicuous lack of examples. Researchers who plan to make extensive use of open-ended questions will want to supplement this book with other resources.

The final chapter of the book offers an example of the construction and piloting of a specific motivational questionnaire (which is the most significant change from the first edition of the book), intended to “provide a detailed, illustrative analysis of how an actual scientific research instrument

was developed from scratch following the theoretical guidelines” (p. xi). Especially useful is the information on the calculation of the internal consistency of the questionnaire items and their subsequent modification. The book concludes with a useful checklist for questionnaire construction that succinctly summarizes the important points from each chapter.

The book is written in straightforward, accessible language, with frequent comments by Dörnyei that illustrate the insights gained through years of experience in using questionnaires. The work is also punctuated with witty and informative quotes from other authors that help focus the reader on big-picture issues related to questionnaire construction.

Overall, this may be the best and most informative work to date on the construction, administration, and processing of questionnaires in second language research. I will definitely consider using this book in my graduate classes on second language research.

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ELLIS, ROD, SHAWN LOEWEN, CATHERINE ELDER, ROSEMARY ERLAM, JENEFER PHILP, & HAYO REINDERS. (Eds.). *Implicit and Explicit Knowledge in Second Language Learning, Testing and Teaching*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 2009. Pp. xi, 408. \$49.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-84769-174-3.

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Over the past two to three decades, consensus has begun to emerge across diverse disciplines in support of the notions that implicit and explicit knowledge in language are manifested by mechanisms in distinct areas of the brain, entail distinct types of representation, and overall are quite dissociated. The current volume is a wide-ranging compilation based on three years' of comprehensive inquiry on differentiated roles of implicit and explicit knowledge as applied to second language (L2) acquisition. The authors fully embrace the dichotomy, asserting that such a partition is essential for teasing apart the functions of the two types of knowledge within L2 proficiency and for understanding the effects of instructional approaches on L2 acquisition. They also maintain that at a basic level, this distinction shapes our grasp of the very nature of the acquisition process. These premises form the basis for several absorbing discussions and solid experimental accounts throughout this volume.

The book is logically organized into five interconnected sections, reflecting the scope and sequence of the three overarching objectives driving the research project. Specifically, these goals entail (a) devising tests to measure L2 implicit and explicit grammatical knowledge; (b) identifying the respective relationships between L2 implicit/explicit knowledge and general language proficiency; and (c) exploring the contributions of form-focused instruction to the acquisition of implicit and explicit L2 grammatical knowledge. Although each of these objectives receives adequate treatment, it is fair to say that the two primary foci of the book are the investigation of aspects of L2 knowledge and L2 instruction, whereas the examination of L2 learning does not receive equal scrutiny.

Of the book's five sections, section 1 consists of a chapter in which Rod Ellis presents an accessible overview of second language acquisition (SLA) research and relates the primary SLA issues to L2 implicit and explicit knowledge, learning, and instruction. Additionally, Ellis weighs in to conclude the volume in section 5 with an executive summary that does not shy away from assessing the previous chapters' experimental results and, when required, acknowledging the limitations of the study as a whole. He considers the team's initial research plan, noting that it squarely meets the study's first objective, while also recognizing that the second and third objectives have not been fully met. For the most part, Ellis frames the entire study as a work in progress, and thus the reader comes to appreciate that scientific endeavors can be successful in the absence of definitive outcomes.

Sandwiched between Ellis's contextualizing introductory and closing remarks, the remaining sections of the book lay out an array of methodologically sound experiments, even though some yield less than conclusive empirical findings. Such is the case in the foundational second section of the volume, which focuses on the development of tests as a means of obtaining reliable and valid measurements of implicit and explicit (grammatical) knowledge. The four chapters in this section advance theoretically based testing instruments of L2 implicit and explicit knowledge that fill a void in current SLA literature, including the elicited oral imitation test (ch. 3), response time measures of grammaticality judgments (ch. 4), and the metalinguistic knowledge test (ch. 5). The test batteries clearly demonstrate why experimental results are not always clear-cut even given a well-developed base.

The measures of knowledge are applied to four rather diverse contexts in section 3: ob-

stacles in the learning of certain grammatical structures, the nature of language proficiency, individual variation in language proficiencies, and metalinguistic knowledge of teacher trainees. Chapter 7 presents a helpful evaluation of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) tests and the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), concluding that to a large degree both the IELTS and TOEFL draw upon explicit knowledge. Chapter 8 touches on learner variability, showing positive correlations between implicit/explicit knowledge and the learner variable. Chapter 9 explores the metalinguistic knowledge of two distinct trainee teacher profiles, native speakers and nonnative speakers, and examines the impact of these differences on form-focused instruction. The study's primary finding is that both groups of teacher trainees have relatively low metalinguistic knowledge, with the native speaker group being the lower of the two.

The four chapters in section 4 investigate whether form-focused instruction plays a role in the acquisition of L2 implicit and explicit knowledge. Form-focused instructional options include those based on input to students, explicit grammatical information, production, and corrective feedback. The results of input-based versus output-based teaching of the indefinite article *a* as an expression of generic meaning are examined in chapter 10, with each approach demonstrating merit. Chapter 11 reports on learners who received instruction on the third person *-s* under the condition of intensive exposure in the absence of explanation. The outcomes show no significant effect on implicit/explicit knowledge. Chapter 12 looks at the role of enhanced input on the intake and acquisition of English negative adverbs. Grammaticality judgment tests were used to arrive at the conclusion that enhanced input positively affects intake and acquisition. Chapter 13 inquires whether different outcomes obtain when implicit versus explicit corrective feedback is employed in the target structure, past tense *-ed*. The researchers' findings suggest that explicit feedback effects are greater than those of implicit feedback.

In terms of content and layout, the combination of detailed information pertaining to study participants, an appendix with test batteries, and coherent analyses allow for seamless replication of a number of the studies presented, with the exciting possibility of extending or varying the experiment for further study. Test results are displayed with statistical analyses, enhancing the reader's ability to determine the significance of individual factors in the acquisition of L2 implicit/explicit knowledge. There are some extremely trivial

annoyances such as the lack of an author index and an unfortunate error on page 24 where chapter 10 is referenced when Ellis is referring to chapter 11. In sum, this valuable and timely resource will complete the reference library of SLA researchers, teachers, and students.

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KING, NIGEL, & CHRISTINE HORROCKS. *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010. Pp. viii, 248. \$43.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-4129-1257-0.

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There has been a recent profusion of manuals designed to help novice qualitative researchers. Their how-to approach is undoubtedly a good thing because these books provide social scientists, especially graduate students, with guidelines for making their research more systematic and rigorous. King and Horrocks's contribution gives us an accessible but sophisticated look at interviewing as a research method. The authors point out in the introduction that interviewing is a familiar activity—we constantly see public figures, experts, and witnesses to an event being interviewed on television—but that as a method, the research interview has particular challenges. I agree with their premise that conducting a successful interview is far more difficult than it may seem, and there are many subtle complexities that a skillful interviewer should be aware of. The book does overlap somewhat with other books on the subject, such as Seidman's *Interviewing as Qualitative Research* (Teachers College Press, 2006), but by contrast it does not focus on a particular type of interview, but rather takes a broad approach and covers a range of interview types.

The book's eleven chapters are comprehensive in their coverage of the various aspects of interviewing, from conducting group interviews (ch. 5) and using recent technologies like Skype (ch. 6) to consideration of ethics in interviewing (ch. 7). The authors present a poststructural view of the interview as a co-constructed social practice. However, I was surprised that concepts such as intersubjectivity, which seemed directly related, were not discussed. The absence of some concepts may be due to the authors' applied social psychology background, which I found refreshing because it is different from that of researchers trained in the anthropological tradition. For instance, in chap-

ter 2 ("Philosophical Assumptions") the authors locate a range of assumptions about knowledge construction that are implicit in the methods of epistemological traditions in philosophy and social sciences research. They "question notions of objectivity and the epistemological integrity of searching for one universal truth, suggesting that with qualitative interviewing there is the potential for multiple realities" (p. 104). They also take an explicitly critical view, arguing that interviews must be "entangled in the politics and practices of the social world" (p. 126).

Chapters 3 through 6 tend to be didactic, presenting solid and practical advice on interviewing. The authors provide excellent concrete examples drawn from different disciplines; for example, they illustrate the relative merits of using different types of interview guides (pp. 38–40) or avoiding pitfalls in phrasing questions (pp. 50–51). There could have been more examples that used transcripts or protocols to demonstrate their point. Chapters 7 through 11 present aspects of qualitative interviewing such as ethics (ch. 7), reflexivity (ch. 8), data analysis (ch. 9), and phenomenological and narrative research (chs. 10 & 11). The authors do well to balance their discussion of practical concerns and epistemological considerations. For example, the chapter on reflexivity approaches the topic as a philosophical concern for locating oneself in one's work and recognizing how one's personal motivations influence the research. The authors give several fine examples from excerpts of research projects. Chapter 9 gives a brief introduction to analyzing interview data, which is useful for novice researchers, especially the section on deciding on conventions and level of detail needed for transcriptions. It is worth noting that other works, such as Kvale and Brinkman's *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (Sage, 2008) have a more thorough discussion of interview analysis.

One shortcoming of the book was the omission of several topics that are relevant to interviewing in language education and applied linguistics. Because it is a book written for qualitative researchers across social science disciplines, the authors make the common assumption that interviews are monolingual interactions between monolingual (fully competent adult native) speakers sharing the same first language (L1). In our field this is often not the case, and so questions of what language to use, appropriateness of codeswitching, and translating transcriptions in the second language (L2) become paramount. Likewise, although they include a nice discussion of building rapport and dealing with unequal

status and difficult interviews (ch. 4), they do not mention how cross-cultural differences could affect the interview process. Neither do they consider interviewing other age groups (e.g., young children, teenagers) or L2 speakers who may have an incomplete mastery of the language in which they are being interviewed. One final quailm was that they approach an interview study (chs. 3, 4 and ch. 9 on analysis) as a self-contained method. In educational research, interview data are often triangulated with other sorts of data. In educational ethnography, for example, interviews are generally used in conjunction with classroom observation and other sources, and good interviews questions should flow from what the observer is seeing in the lessons.

*Interviews in Qualitative Research* is recommended for graduate students doing a dissertation that relies on qualitative interviews. It will also be of interest to those teaching a graduate seminar on qualitative research, as certain sections can be used for supplemental reading and several examples would generate discussion.

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KOSHY, VALSA. *Action Research for Improving Educational Practice: A Step-by-Step Guide*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010. Pp. xv, 160. \$44.95, paper. ISBN 0 978-1-84860-160-4.

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Action research, traditionally defined as research carried out by practitioners with the aim of instituting change, has long had a place within the field of language learning and teaching as a means of generating local knowledge that can inform teaching practice. This volume provides a concise and accessible introduction to action research for novice researchers. Aimed primarily at K-12 teachers, it offers a step-by-step guide to conducting an action research project, taking readers from the initial planning stages through collecting and analyzing data and writing up and disseminating the findings. Although not specifically addressing the field of language learning, it nevertheless could serve as a useful guide for language teachers interested in engaging in action research as part of their professional development.

The book's eight chapters comprise three major sections. The first four chapters serve as an introduction to action research, beginning with

a definition of what it is and what it is used for (ch. 1), and then moving on to the preliminary stages of research such as selecting a topic (ch. 2), conducting a literature review (ch. 3), and planning (ch. 4). Chapters 5 and 6 provide brief outlines of methods for data collection (ch. 5) and analysis (ch. 6). These methods are primarily qualitative, with coverage on designing surveys, conducting classroom observations and interviews, collecting relevant documents, video recording, and coding qualitative data (including use of computer software for this purpose). These chapters also include lists detailing the advantages and disadvantages of each of these methods as well as a discussion of research ethics and strategies to enhance validity and reliability. The final two chapters offer practical advice on writing (ch. 7) and publishing (ch. 8) action research. Case studies summarizing action research projects (usually in a British context) are incorporated throughout to illustrate the concepts being discussed. Each chapter also includes a short list of references to relevant texts and Web sites on research methods, action research, and educational policy.

Overall, the book has much to offer to teacher practitioners with no prior research experience. It provides a thoughtful discussion of the purpose, goals, and limitations of action research, and its chapters on planning, reviewing the literature, and writing up research could be read productively by any novice (or experienced) researcher. The discussion of research ethics is most welcome, although it does not go much beyond the basics of obtaining consent and maintaining confidentiality. Given the sensitivity of conducting research in classrooms (especially on one's own students or colleagues, as is commonly done in action research), more could have been said regarding the specific ethical issues that can arise in situated research.

Given the range of data collection methods presented, discussion of each is necessarily sketchy, and anyone taking up one of these methods as part of a research project would be well advised to consult some of the texts included in the list of references. More seriously, there is no discussion of discourse analysis as a potential alternative to content analysis for the study of classroom interaction, and information on using statistics is limited to frequency counts. Although an extensive discussion of these analytical methods would not be expected in a book of this type, some mention of what one can and cannot legitimately claim based on frequency counts or content analyses would have added to the book's otherwise solid discussion on generating evidence to support claims.

Similarly, the issue of how one might define or measure vague constructs such as motivation or attitudes (the focus of several of the case studies) or what would count as evidence of change in these areas is never raised. Although these absences reflect the need to balance comprehensiveness and readability for a nonspecialist audience, they make the book best suited for teacher practitioners who want to explore their own practice rather than for graduate student researchers who are more likely to be held to stricter standards.

Despite these shortcomings, the book succeeds in its stated goal of demystifying the research process for nonacademics and empowering teachers to engage in action research as a means of improving practice and expanding their own knowledge of the field. Although the absence of exercises or activities that would help readers to develop their research skills somewhat limits the book's usefulness as a classroom text, it could serve as a general guidebook to action research or as a supplemental text within a comprehensive course on research methods.

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PAVLENKO, ANETA. (Ed.). *The Bilingual Mental Lexicon: Interdisciplinary Approaches*. Clevedon, England: Bilingual Matters, 2009. Pp. xv, 250. \$39.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-84769-124-8.

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The book consists of a four-page preface and nine chapters. The shortest is 20 pages, the longest 36, but the other seven all range between 24 and 29 pages. Because the topics are so diverse, each chapter has its own list of references. There is no composite bibliography, but there is a list of authors before the three-page subject index.

Several chapters contain tables and diagrams, all in black and white. They are organized intuitively and are not needlessly complex. However, one diagram (p. 63) is fuzzy, though still legible.

Excellent proofreading has produced a text remarkably free of typos and semantic lapses. For the latter, I am reduced to mentioning a handful of instances. Unless it is intended as humor, "to conclude, let me begin" (p. 151) could use some polishing. It is not hard to imagine a euphonious alternative to "refer to references" (p. 239). "Gestures' spoken lexical affiliates" (p. 167) smacks of an imported construction, albeit completely comprehensible.

I found only occasional, generally peripheral mechanical issues. One trivial example involves capitalization ("Van de Poel," p. 73, versus "Van De Poel," p. 247). Here a slash is missing from "and/or" (p. 187), there a superfluous comma follows "thus" (p. 194). The use of double parentheses is arguably awkward (p. 7). I suspect a missing umlaut on "Uber" (p. 231), and there is no doubt in the case of "Düsseldorf" (p. ix).

More noticeable is the matter of accent marks on Iberian surnames ending *-ez*. It appears from a quick Internet search that several of the authors cited have themselves dispensed with the accent mark, and that is their business. Even so, the occurrence of "A. E. Hernandez" and "M. Hernández" in successive entries (p. 22) is a bit disconcerting. "García" comes with (p. 241) or without the accent mark (pp. 213, 236), as does "Sebastián-Gallés" (pp. 22, 246 with; p. 77 without).

The preface fittingly touts the inclusion of scholarship from a number of disciplines as the book's main contribution to research on the bilingual lexicon (p. xiii). To provide a degree of coherence, the authors address four points from their disciplinary perspectives: questions, methods, summary of research, and future directions (p. xii). The emphasis naturally varies from chapter to chapter. For example, the first is primarily a summary and consequently has a vast bibliography, whereas the second has a rather short list of references and focuses on pointing out promising new directions.

Even given all these differences of approach, the editor achieves the goal of offering more than just a collection of loosely related pieces of scholarship. As a way of highlighting the connections, on numerous occasions a summary of research includes references to other chapters in this volume.

The preface identifies the primary targeted readership as researchers on the bilingual lexicon (p. xii). I agree wholeheartedly that this book would be most useful to said group, but I trust that by this point they require little convincing.

No doubt others will find the specifics of at least certain chapters to be of interest, and perhaps the general thrust of some of the other contributions. The first three pieces could be noteworthy for neurocognitive studies, the last two for neurolinguistics. The following contributions (chs. 4-7) would be particularly apt for anyone teaching a second language (L2) or additional languages (L3).

I offer as a particularly useful example for L2 a portion lifted from the paradigmatic discussion



of linguistic categories (p. 137). Although 'chair' and *silla* more or less line up, as do 'bench' and *banco*, 'stool' may come across as either *silla* or *banco*, though in those cases the two are not generally interchangeable for the Spanish speaker. The point that needs to be explicit for language teachers is that although learning words is easy, identifying and assimilating categories is not. Furthermore, in this case the problem is relevant whether the L2 is English or Spanish.

The exposition proceeds with concrete things that may exist in one country but not another, such as certain kinds of windows (p. 138). One can, however, see a picture of such a thing and grasp the meaning. What does the L2 teacher do, though, if the concept of privacy does not exist in the first language (L1) (e.g., Russian) but is central to many L2 (e.g., English) speakers?

The authors build on the strengths of previous models while seeking ways to eliminate, or at least minimize, weak points. They enumerate areas that have not been adequately investigated. They repeatedly advocate taking more variables into consideration in studying bilingualism and multilingualism, with an eye to a more complex and nuanced set of models.

The book leaves us with some exciting and challenging notions. The cognitive processes of a monolingual and those of a bilingual operate differently (p. 1). Bilingualism is a spectrum, not a matter of either/or. Each bilingual mind is unique and constantly in flux (p. 72). Some features of the spoken L2 do not apply to the written L2, and vice versa (p. 14). Each language added to the mix makes bilingualism and multilingualism even more complicated.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not celebrate an unexpected moment of humor. After thanking certain parties, one author amends the time-worn *mea culpa* clause to read, "All remaining nonsense is mine" (p. 179).

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PISKE, THORSTEN, & MARTHA YOUNG-SCHOLTEN. (Eds.). *Input Matters in SLA*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters, 2009. Pp. v, 312. \$169.95, cloth; \$52.06, paper. ISBN 978-1-84769-110-1, cloth; 978-1-84769-109-5, paper.

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This edited volume explains the place of input in current second language acquisition (SLA) re-

search and its implications for second language (L2) instruction. It puts together the work of both well established and young scholars who explain why input matters not only in L2 acquisition in general but also in L2 phonological acquisition in particular. The book is a much-needed contribution to both the field of language instruction whose methods are still production focused, and to the field of SLA, which usually overlooks adult L2 phonology acquisition and development.

In the introduction, one of the strongest features of the book, the editors provide a general picture of the state of the research regarding input in L2 development and the implications for teaching. With the assumption that language-specific mechanisms enable acquisition, the editors address our current understanding of property and transitional theories and give an informative overview of input and phonology. The particular aim that drives the volume is to shed light on the role of input in the rate, route, and end state in L2 acquisition. Because of its uncommon focus on phonology, the editors include four compelling reasons to justify the book. The introductory chapter provides a strong background on both input in SLA, and research in L2 phonology in a clear and accessible way.

The first part deals with matters of input in seven chapters. In chapter 1, Andreas Rhode reports the results of a study on the learning development of the English progressive within the frame of the aspect hypothesis and the distributional bias hypothesis. The results shed light on the role of input in the route of acquisition. In chapter 2, Bill VanPatten addresses O'Grady's (2003) and Carroll's (2001) accounts about the nature of input processing by comparing and contrasting theirs with his account. VanPatten's usual clear and accessible style is present in this chapter, and the reader will find his accounts on negative evidence particularly useful to better understand instructed SLA studies. In chapter 3, Marjolijn Verspoor, Wander Lowie, and Kees de Bot provide a clear account of dynamic systems theory to explain L2 development. They provide the rationale for a comprehension-based instructional approach and offer a personal account of their learning of Indonesian which, although may not be realistic for certain learners' personalities, informs L2 learning from a student perspective. In chapter 4, Stephen Krashen provides an update on his influential comprehension hypothesis (CH) and briefly addresses the limitations of the skill building hypothesis and the comprehensible output hypothesis. He explains how findings from animal language communication support the CH

and leaves open the question of whether his hypothesis would also be supported by alien language learning.

Chapters 5 and 6 address the role of output in SLA. Nel De Jong reports the findings from a study with L1 Dutch speakers trying to learn Spanish adjective–noun agreement rules from a skill-based L2 learning perspective. The findings suggest a role for production within the study's conditions, however and, as expressed by the author, the training tasks may not be appropriate for classroom contexts. In chapter 6, John Stephenson reports the findings of a study that compared learners' attitudes towards *The Learnables* materials (Winitz, 2002) and the communicative approach. Because of the study's focus on learners' attitudes, it did not give any actual support for the participants' perspectives. However, the study provides information about the value put on language production by L2 learners. The first part of the book closes with chapter 7, where Werner Bleyhl presents a compelling argument based on developmental psychology findings for the essential role of input in L2 acquisition processes, and it connects theory with practice in an effective, readable way.

The second part of the book begins with chapter 8, where Alene Moyer claims that traditional measures for phonological development overlook factors such as sources of input and learners' intentions. The reader will benefit from the presentation of recent research on opportunities for input, time on task, and context, as well as how they affect L2 phonological attainment. In chapter 9, James Flege reviews the literature in an attempt to evaluate DeKeyser's (2000) claim on the minor role of input in native-like pronunciation after the critical period. A recurring theme of the second part of the book is the critical period hypothesis (CPH) and how it has hindered the search for other potential sources of variation in L2, especially phonological variation. Through his experience sampling method, Flege proposes new ways of quantifying input to observe factors besides age that explain L2 phonological variation. Perhaps one of the most practical chapters for L2 instructors is Benedetta Bassetti's (ch. 10), which focuses on the effects of orthographic representations on L2 learners' pronunciation. She addresses research on a variety of writing systems, and its implications for classroom teaching will enlighten instructors who teach L2 writing systems.

Chapter 11 addresses whether phonologically varied L2 English input from L1 Danish teachers influences learners' L2 vowel pronunciation. Al-

though the study is based on a small sample of only male participants, Ocke-Schwen Bohn and Rikki Bundgaard-Nielsen address the topic of input heterogeneity. In chapter 12, Anja Steinlen argues that pronunciation guides are too general to accurately describe acoustic properties that are actually produced by native speakers, and she reports the results of a study that supports her argument. The volume concludes with chapter 13, in which Henning Wode presents data on phonological development in immersion settings. The data seem to support his claim that there are no age-related phonological differences but rather proficiency differences, thus providing an alternative perspective to the CPH.

A limitation of the volume is the seemingly accepted view of the native speaker as the ideal phonological model, which may lead to controversy in some applied linguistics circles. But in sum, this needed volume not only offers a range of perspectives on input matters, but its vast glossary and implications for teaching sections will appeal to SLA researchers and L2 instructors alike.

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## ARABIC

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ALOSH, MAHDI. *Ahlan wa Sahlan: Functional Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009. Pp. 668. \$69.95, cloth. ISBN 978-0-300-12272-5. CD and DVD, free to adopters.

ALOSH, MAHDI. *Ahlan wa Sahlan: Functional Modern Standard Arabic for Beginners, Letters and Sounds of the Arabic Language. Workbook*. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010. Pp. 172. \$34.00, paper, ISBN 978-0-300-14048-4. CD and DVD, free to adopters.

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This instructional package consists of a textbook, a workbook, one audio CD, and one DVD available for download as MP3 and MP4 files, in addition to an online interactive Web site. The workbook consists of six units in which letters of the alphabet are introduced with groupings depending on the shape of the shell. The presentations are structured logically, and the abundant exercises include activities aimed at helping students recognize the letters and practice writing them. Each letter is presented in its different forms. The

DVD and CD provide good practice exercises for most units and introduce cultural aspects such as greetings, people's introductions, nationalities, and leave-taking. The amount of detail, variety of exercises, modes of material presentation, audio and video material, and the interactive Web site make a good deal of valuable material available to students and instructors. Overall, the material is rich and variable, and serves the goals listed in the introduction.

There are, however, other areas for improvement. Although the DVD material is visually helpful, the pictures and illustrations are sometimes confusing. Matching the picture to the vocabulary item leaves room for occasional ambiguity. This is due to one or more of the following reasons: (a) The writer uses certain vocabulary items that are influenced by the Syrian dialect; for example, *musajjileh* 'tape recorder' and *balah* 'dates' instead of *musajjil* and *tamr* (p. 50); (b) some words are used in the plural form but the illustration denotes a singular object, and vice versa; for example, the words for 'chicken' and 'Bedouins' (p. 11); and (c) the writer uses some illustrations that can be associated with more than one word; for example, illustrations and words for Lebanon, 'athletic' and 'strong' (p. 30), 'smile' and 'nest' (p. 45), and 'farmer' and 'snow' (p. 50). The phonetic material warrants revision (pp. 53, 54, 57, 77). Because the material is not intended for linguistics students, it may reinforce the stereotypical complexity of Arabic. The material on phonetics could, however, guide instructors in effective ways of teaching differences in Arabic and English sounds. Similarly, Appendix B (pp. 144–145) needs careful revision. Explaining emphatic consonants of Arabic requires more than simply describing the consonant and mapping it to an English equivalent. Research on emphasis and pharyngealization suggests that attention should be focused on the syllable, not on only the consonant. Exemplifying the emphatic voiceless alveolar fricative (the emphatic variant of /s/) and the emphatic voiceless alveolar plosive (the emphatic variant of /t/) by *s* in *sod* and *t* in *tar*, respectively, can do little, if anything, to help students understand the differences. For native speakers of American English, these are allophonic variants whose differences are the province of specialized linguists. Current research in the phonetics of emphasis in Arabic can help in teaching emphatic sounds, but this knowledge and training should be directed to Arabic instructors, who can use it to enhance their work with students.

The *Ahlan wa Sahlan* textbook comprises 24 units, a list of appendices pertaining mainly to

the Arabic alphabet and verb conjugation, and an answer key for exercises in both books. Each unit follows a somewhat unified format: it begins with a list of objectives and is followed by vocabulary presentation, reading passages, and comprehension activities. After every reading passage or grammar target, exercises in increasing complexity are presented to internalize the material. The textbook focuses on the communicative value of almost all exercises and activities. On several occasions, the author conveniently provides summaries of the grammar targets that serve both the student and the instructor.

In the introduction, the author asserts the goal of the instructional package to be the achievement of "a proficiency level within the Intermediate range as established by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL)" (p. xxviii). This goal is well served by the course material. The appealing presentation and the variety of approaches to learning are commendable. The author has opted for Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) as the variety for the textbook, while also acknowledging the diglossic situation in the Arab world, especially the fact that in all Arabic-speaking countries, oral skills (listening and speaking) are acquired in the local dialect (p. xxvi). Although the justification for MSA is based on educational and pedagogical principles, there are equally strong arguments for incorporating dialects beginning at the Novice level. There is little evidence to support the idea that teaching only MSA at the early stages provides a sufficient foundation for learning the dialects later. Indeed, introducing any dialect of Arabic early on makes learning the language considerably easier and more rewarding. The decision to adopt MSA for all audio and video material results in less natural interactions that sometimes lack thematic unity. Examples of this problem appear in the dialogues of units 4 and 21, and the content on page 42.

I also take issue with the inclusion in the text of low-frequency vocabulary and structural items. The use of dual demonstratives, for example is highly marked, even for native speakers.

The use of word-final case endings is one of the most problematic issues in the book. It is common knowledge that Arabic is highly inflectional. Vocalizing word endings complicates early learning and drives students to ask for rules for nominative, accusative, and genitive cases when the focus should be directed to basic material. Besides, it is unusual to use case endings in speech, even beyond the intermediate level, because they are infrequent in native speech. The book's

numerous examples include unit 16, where the vendor at the Juice Café speaks Levantine, whereas the students speak MSA with marked case endings.

Ultimately, I found this course package to be both rich and enriching. The materials can help Novice-level students advance to the Intermediate level. I believe, however, that the materials need to be complemented by solid instruction and training in an Arabic dialect from the beginning. Task-based instruction can support the use of authentic material that enhances learning.

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LAHLALI, EL MUSTAPHA. *How to Write in Arabic*. Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2009. Pp. 185. \$37.50, paper. ISBN 978-0-7486-3588-7.

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This English–Arabic self-help text is organized into an introduction, five units, an answer key, and two appendices. Each of the five units (“Connectors,” “Letters,” “Stylistic Expressions and Vocabulary,” “Writing Articles,” and “Creative Writing”) includes notes followed by exercises. The author’s aims are to help learners to develop and refine writing skills, achieve competency with an efficient style, learn necessary style-related linguistic features, adopt Arabic stylistics, become familiar with different written genres, and acquire writing expressions. These broad goals are attempted within the confines of a short book that incorporates helpful and original features to assist the writing learner and practitioner.

With this volume Lahlali offers the learner a welcome updated writing guide for Arabic. This work is preceded by two other well-known publications dedicated to writing development. Al-Warraki and Hassanein’s (1994) text on Arabic connectors remains an authoritative self-help guide that treats comprehensively four categories of connectors with accompanying exercises. Lahlali offers one unit on these connectors and adds four others that address important areas of writing not known by this reviewer to have been previously considered. Although Samy (1999) is perhaps the classic textbook on writing, Lahlali’s contribution offers a new presentation and a range of activities that will match the expectations of current learners. Although this text offers improvements over the two existing re-

sources, it may not satisfy those accustomed to their well-known approach. This inviting text can be successfully used to autonomously review and expand writing skills in areas described and exemplified by the author.

In “Connectors” the author presents connectors in Arabic in a straightforward fashion according to their functions, and each one is accompanied by examples. These include numerous connectors and connecting expressions that occur as individual words or particles (e.g., conjunctions, ordinals, conditional and necessity words), relational phrases (e.g., comparative, resultative, introductory, conclusive, summative), or subjective phrases (e.g., those expressing argument, similarity, probability.) Sentence examples clarify the use of each term. Brief explanatory notes and examples are followed by exercises that Intermediate High and Advanced learners should find accessible and useful.

The second unit, “Letters,” offers brief guidelines in English for producing culturally and linguistically appropriate written correspondence. These include guidelines and examples for letters of congratulations, condolence, apology, complaint, application, and resignation, as well as love letters, email messages, memoranda, and advertisements. After learners read model texts and answer comprehension questions, they proceed to write a letter in line with the text. A colleague noted that many native speakers would find this correspondence guide helpful.

Unit 3, “Stylistic Expressions and Vocabulary,” provides lists of expressions common to Arabic writing with an English gloss, each set grouped according to stylistic use. As an example, one of over 80 such entries is *alaa wajh al-tafSiil* ‘in detail, at great length.’ The expression is modeled in a sentence with a structure and context intended to clarify the expression’s meaning and function. This effort usually succeeds. Expressions are thematically grouped according to expressive uses (e.g., hard work and efforts, emotion, failure and disappointment, time and age, economy and trade, elections, force and violence). This effort to make vocabulary available for writing according to domain and purpose is original and valuable given the small number of such listings for Arabic idioms. Moreover, Lahlali’s effort aligns with recent corpus-based efforts to identify and assemble idioms and lexical items.

The fourth unit, “Writing Articles,” offers guidance for writing a variety of texts: a précis, introductions and conclusions, a news report, an Arabic essay or article, and an introduction to a TV show. Perhaps surprisingly, punctuation in writing

an Arabic essay is highlighted. The author also directs readers to writing guidelines on the Internet (p. 116). After suitable texts are presented for basic discourse analysis, learners are asked to prepare articles using the models and guidance provided.

In Unit 5, "Creative Writing," Lahlali outlines steps for writing a short story. Rhetoric (*al-balaagha*) and its features are a central aspect of writing in Arabic, so Lahlali presents Arabic examples of simile (*al-tashbih*), assonance (*al-janaas*), and metonymy (*al-kinaaya*), all within the genre's four parts. The learner can analyze each of two samples and identify the key features of the writing.

Two appendices add valuable content to this writing guide. Appendix 1 highlights examples of typical learner writing errors and provides exercises to address them. The treatment of errors and the presentation of grammatical structures are not as thorough as in mainstream Arabic textbooks. Common learner errors are summarized and offered as exercises, and answers for many exercises are included in a separate index. Appendix 2 consists of 19 pages of useful idioms that can be used in learner writing projects. Some may prefer different English translations for these expressions.

On balance this book contains more Arabic than English. Its claims about results may be broader than the actual results achieved, depending upon the level of the learner. This new guide is concise and inclusive. The reader should not be confused by the title, *How to Write in Arabic*. This self-help text is not about how to write the Arabic alphabet. It offers concrete, authentic, and functional guidelines for learners who wish to develop and improve their writing skills.

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## FRENCH

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BROWN, BECKY. *À Table!: The Gourmet Culture of France*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2010. Pp. 205. \$35.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-5810-297-6. Instructor's Manual.

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According to neuroscientific research, learning is a multisensory and multimodal process. The more

input and interconnections, the deeper learning is likely to be. At birth, our primary senses are taste and smell. Thus, everything goes in the mouth to be "learned," often to the consternation of doting adults. In most American education, however, taste and smell get relegated to the 20-minute lunch break, an occasional science class, and the world language classroom. The latter, when done well, touches all aspects of the foreign tongue. For French, taste holds a particularly relished position, for France is renowned for its *bon goût*. *À Table!: The Gourmet Culture of France* brings taste and smell back to center stage in content-based instruction (CBI) integrating history, culture, civilization, and literature. The table of contents, appropriately labeled "Le Menu," lists chapters as the nine courses for a real French meal: *Apéritif*, *Amuse-bouche*, *Entrée*, *Plat principal*, *Salade*, *Assiette de fromage*, *Dessert*, *Café et friandises*, and *Digestif*. Each contains an introduction that explains some facet of French *gastronomie*, from its origins in chapter 1 to an all-inclusive sweep of today's cultural expressions in chapter 9. Each part of the chapter is followed by its own *cuillerée de réflexion*, or discussion questions, that go well beyond basic comprehension, urging learners to mull over what they are learning with one another. The *zestes d'activité* let teachers and students engage the material in an interesting, interactive fashion. Small literary bits, called *goût littéraire*, appear throughout the book; these include short readings like Valéry's *Le vin perdu*, a poem like the somewhat overdone *Déjeuner du matin* by Prévert, and, of course, the unavoidable Proustian *madeleines*. There are slices of realia, ranging from *Un menu pour enfant* by Auguste Escoffier (p. 53) to *L'art de découper le fromage* (p. 94). *Pincées de grammaire* (the partitive, the polite conditional, etc.) are interspersed throughout: delectable *métaphores mangeables* and juicy *grains de conversation*; *brins de parole* made of first-person culinary musings; *dégustations* to foster sampling of the "real thing" and to teach the fine art of critical tasting (via supplied rubrics); *à vous, chez vous* recipes (made with Amero-friendly measures) to savor at home; and, the *au-delà de pour en savoir plus*. The instructor's manual offers teachers sufficient background information to compensate for gaps in gourmet/gourmand knowledge. *À Table!* integrates easily into an upper-intermediate- to advanced curriculum in its entirety, or may serve to supplement a more standard conversation, writing, culture, or literature course. When it is used as the *plat principal* of a course, the author suggests pairing it with

Peter Mayle's *Aventure dans la France Gourmande: avec ma fourchette, mon couteau et mon tire-bouchon* (Seuil, 2003, translated into French by Jean Rosenthal), and/or Calixthe Beyala's *Comment cuisiner son mari à l'africaine* (Albin Michel, 2000). Both the textbook (pp. 173–182) and the instructor's manual (pp. 43–50) provide chapter-by-chapter discussion questions for these suggested works. A number of films are likewise suggested at the end of each textbook chapter and in the instructor's manual (p. 50). I was very pleased to see *La grande bouffe* listed, despite its somewhat unsavory finale and 3-hour length. *La grande bouffe* and *Delicatessen* do not offer "comfort food" for thought, however artistically and culturally authentic they may be. Both the textbook and the manual recommend further readings, yet they provide a paucity of Web site URLs (only eight!). I did not see the stellar MERLOT/Alliance Française *gastronomie* link of the *Missions virtuelles* listed, for example. Nor did I see mention of podcasts on gastronomic subjects, or the mobile apps (available on iTunes) like *Cuisiner*, *Liste d'épicerie mobile*, *Marmiton*, *Saveurs*, *iDélices*, *La liste des achats*, *Encyclopédie de fromages*, or *Vins de France*. Perhaps the author assumed that we all know how to search online.

The only off-putting—and this ever so slight—aspect of the text, for me, arises in the first chapter, *Apéritif*. The *dégustation* is *le chocolat noir*. It simply jarred my sensibilities by its placement in the *apéro* section along with a text on the *goûter*. It is followed by a *brin de parole* entitled *La vie se croque au Nutella*, and by the chapter *recette, mousse au chocolat*. The *préface* states, nonetheless, that "Decisions regarding chapter content and topic order were guided first and foremost by pedagogical soundness rather than necessarily by topical coherence. This occasional disjunction is, in fact, incidental for a CBI course whose goal is language mastery through content, as opposed to courses in culinary schools in which this particular content would be key" (p. xi). I would imagine, too, that the author and editors opted for chocolate and Nutella in part as tasteful "openers" to tantalize students into staying the course. Starting a class with chocolate tasting undoubtedly "makes the medicine go down in the most delightful way," thus accomplishing the ultimate goal of the *apéritif*.

In all, then, *A Table! The Gourmet Culture of France* provides a lively, intriguing, well-designed and pedagogically sound set of learning materials that bring taste back into the curriculum and put content-based learning on the table. After all, France is a country where *l'éducation au goût* has a

central place in public education, so this approach is most fitting.

KATHRYN MURPHY-JUDY

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HUBBELL, AMY L. *À la recherche d'un emploi. Business French in a Communicative Context*. Newburyport, MA: Focus Publishing, 2010. Pp. xviii, 254. \$59.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-58510-372-0. Instructor's Resource Manual. ISBN 978-1-58510-411-6.

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*A la recherche d'un emploi* is a business French textbook that targets third-year college students and includes an instructor's manual directed at French professors who are not specialists in business French. It includes seven chapters, and in the instructor's manual Dr. Hubbell proposes sample syllabi for semester courses that meet either two or three days a week. Videos on a publisher Web site, YouTube and other publicly available videos, and materials found through Web links are integrated into textbook activities.

Although the author tells us in the instructor's manual that she kept in mind the international exams of the Paris Chamber of Commerce (CCIP), the contents include significant information on Canada and on comparisons with the United States that are practical for Americans in ways not covered in exams of the CCIP. For example, in her presentation of types of companies (corporations, partnerships, small and medium-sized companies) she includes well-known American companies where students may seek employment, and she presents 40 French companies listed on the CAC 40, as well as the top 25 Canadian companies. Students thus have real-life-appropriate examples.

Students planning to work for nonprofits, government agencies, or businesses will appreciate Hubbell's content on French government organization, French ministries and their roles, and Web sites on how to learn more. This information is current and includes changes to French overseas departments and territories that took place in April 2011. She integrates into pedagogical exercises videos that are equally current, like the one on sustainable development that comes from L'Oréal's 2011 corporate Web site provided at <http://www.loreal-paris.fr/videos/le-developpement-durable-chez-l-oreal-paris.aspx#>. It is noteworthy that all the videos and links work, and pedagogical exercises are effective.

Although it targets third-year French, the Instructor's Resource Manual aims high, preparing for Paris Chamber of Commerce (CCIP) exams through the B2 level. Hubbell does not explain the ratings of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. The B2 level corresponds roughly to the American ACTFL Advanced Low level, although some B2 requirements fall into the Intermediate High category or into the Advanced Mid category. Few third-year students have achieved a B2 level at the beginning of their first third-year course, but Hubbell's book contains far more vocabulary, explanations, and pedagogical exercises to get them there than do other books that target the B2-level exams. For students at the Intermediate Mid or Intermediate High level, communicative activities in the book, and suggestions to the teacher in the instructor's manual, will help them work toward the next level of competence in reading, writing, interpersonal speaking, presentational speaking, and listening. If they are not ready, students can take a lower level CCIP exam at the A2 or B1 level. Although the instructor's manual does not mention the five Cs of language learning, the author clearly had those in mind in preparing the content and exercises.

This book does not purport to cover all areas of the CCIP exams at the B2 level. For example, the content does not include insurance, transportation, and certain bank documents that one finds in other textbooks. There is no mention of *Produit National Brut* in defining Gross National Product, and abbreviations for long term labor contracts CDD and CDI are resolved using "de" instead of "à," but these minor oversights are rare. They are far outweighed by the availability of resources and organization of communicative activities to provide preparation students will need to take exams at the B2 level. The book may even compete at the fourth-year level, where one can replace certain cultural content (like the first chapter's video on French regional prejudices) and substitute added business content on labor unions or other topics.

This book is also appropriate for courses not leading to CCIP exams. In a composition and conversation course or a course focused on French for special purposes in related fields (international relations, European studies, Francophone studies), instructors have ample materials to help students with double majors or interdisciplinary majors find internships or jobs in their fields. The topics apply to many settings.

Seeking a job is something that every graduate will do, and chapters on writing a resume, preparing a cover letter, going through a job interview,

all with advice on how to put one's best foot forward, are useful for students seeking employment in any language. The etiquette of job seeking has cultural variations between the United States, Canada, and France, and those differences are explored in depth. Explanation of different academic degrees is somewhat sketchy without a better explanation from the instructor. Thus, instructors must become familiar with Europe's Bologna Process for higher education reform to explain how the French went from their former system to just three degrees (*Licence, Master, Doctorat*) in the past decade. Although new degrees are identified (pp. 76–77) by name and linked to a Web site, the referenced old degrees (pp. 15,105) thus still need explanation.

This book's content will be appealing to students and faculty. Pedagogical exercises are sound and helpful. The instructor's manual gives an answer key and good pedagogical suggestions. In summary, it is a welcome addition for teachers of business French and related fields.

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## ITALIAN

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CAPEK-HABEKOVIĆ, ROMANA, & SANDRA PALAICH. *Parola a te!* Instructor's Edition. Boston: Heinle Cengage Learning, 2009. Pp. xiii, 384. \$87.95, paper. ISBN 978-1-4130-2188-2. *Italian Café Music CD*, \$ 15.98. ISBN 1-4130-2319-3. *Book Companion Web Site*, free to adopters.

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*Parola a te* is a textbook for the teaching of Italian at the intermediate level and for conversation courses. Its emphasis is on the geographical, historical, economic, and sociological aspects of Italian culture, which it illustrates as a tension between tradition and modernity. This textbook features a companion Web site as well as an audio CD with songs ranging from classic Fred Buscaglione to contemporary Daniele Silvestri. The Web site provides the audio clips for the *Ascoltiamo!* sections, the links for the *Sul web* expansion activities, and the video clips of the program *Sulla strada*. It also contains teacher resources such as sample syllabi, lesson plans, and pop quizzes.

*Parola a te* comprises twelve chapters, each revolving around a specific Italian region. This framework lays the foundations for the book to

build on several cultural aspects. Historical timelines, recipes, proverbs from regional dialects, highlights on local economies and customs, anecdotes, biographies of notable Italians from the present and the past, all contribute to give a multilayered, complex, and overall enjoyable representation of the country, its character, its heritage, and its people. *Appunti grammaticali*, an appendix of approximately fifty pages, provides a synthetic grammar overview with some application exercises, while the *Vocabolario* features some essential lexicon presented across the textbook.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, *Parola a te* is a very well balanced tool. First and foremost, it offers a wealth of new vocabulary along with the opportunity for students to practice it in meaningful contexts, through a variety of exercise formats, and at different stages in each chapter. Second, it fosters reading and writing at the intermediate level through manageable paragraphs and creative assignments, complemented by online research materials retrievable thanks to the excellent links of *Sul web*. Third, it promotes listening through the *Ascoltiamo!* sections, which include two aural comprehension exercises and a set of personal questions in each chapter, and the video segments of *Sulla strada*, available with related activities on the companion Web site. The audio CD *Italian Café*, featuring songs from the 40s, 50s, 60s, and today, is more of a musical treat than a teaching tool, since there are no related worksheets available. Speaking is fostered through a variety of communicative, pair work activities thematically linked to each chapter. The streamlined grammar and limited exercises at the end of the book are consistent with the goals of *Parola a te*, which is essentially a cultural reader in line with the five Cs (Communication, Culture, Connections, Comparison, and Communities) of the National Standards for foreign language learning.

However, as sound as its pedagogical foundations and overall structure may be, an examination of this textbook reveals serious cracks in different areas, so to speak. Let us start by considering the title itself. "*Parola a te!*" is not an Italian expression, or rather, it is not a correct one. In a television or radio debate, a journalist or a moderator would invite another interlocutor to speak by using the idiomatic phrase "*a te la parola!*," less frequently "*la parola a te!*," roughly 'your turn to speak' or 'over to you' (see also the thread on [www.wordreference.com](http://www.wordreference.com) from December 5, 2008). It appears as if such a title was chosen to suggest the communicative nature of this textbook. Alas the lack of a seemingly harmless definite article makes it fatally flawed.

At any rate, minor lexical, idiomatic and even topographical mistakes are present throughout the book. Here are some examples drawn from the first chapter alone: "*i proiettori anteriori*" instead of "*i fari anteriori*" (car headlights, p. 13); "*rispondi sia in voce che in scritto*" instead of "*rispondi sia a voce che per iscritto*" ('answer both orally and in writing,' p. 23); "*L'associazione finisce col sciogliersi*" instead of "*la società finisce con lo sciogliersi*" ('the joint venture ended up being dissolved,' p. 21). A typical example of typos are some words that have been accidentally hyphenated: "*al-leanza*," "*se-condo*," "*pubblicazio-ne*" (p. 19).

Another serious weakness of *Parola a te* is the total absence of authentic texts by renowned Italian authors or journalists. In fact, all the reading passages are by Capek-Habeković and Palaich themselves. The result is a homogeneous, unoriginal, at times contrived and dull language, from the first chapter to the last. In addition, there is no grammatical progression and no increase in the difficulty level of the language presented. Rather, the reading passages are all characterized by a monotonous and pervasive "*presente storico*," or historic present tense, featuring occasional past tenses of the indicative and even more sporadic tenses of the subjunctive. From the content viewpoint, sometimes too much information is jammed in a single paragraph with the result of confusing the student who is not acquainted with the subject matter. As an example, let us consider the opening paragraph of *Società* in the Piedmont region (p. 6). In the span of eleven lines, it mentions the Italian emigration to North and South America, the domestic emigration from southern to northern Italy, and today's foreign immigration towards Italy with its consequence of racial tensions. These are actually three distinct and highly problematic events in Italian social history that would require a deeper and more elaborate discussion.

Let us conclude by looking into the audio and video components. At least one of the listening comprehension exercises in every chapter is a fill-in-the-blank portion of a reading passage that immediately follows. Although valuable for the sake of intonation and pronunciation, this activity clearly defeats the purpose of practicing and fine-tuning listening skills. The video program consists of edited video clips from Heinle's *Sulla strada* DVD, whose cover is labeled "Video for Introductory Italian Programs," and which is already an integral part of Heinle's three textbooks of elementary Italian, namely *Adesso! 3rd edition*, *Ciao! 6th edition*, and *Salve!* Needless to say, a different product appropriately geared towards the



intermediate and advanced levels would have been more beneficial.

Overall *Parola a te*'s sound pedagogy and cultural content makes it a suitable reader for intermediate and conversation courses, in conjunction with a formal grammar text (Habeković is also author of *Insieme* and *A Vicenda, Lingua*). However, on account of its inherent linguistic weaknesses, this textbook's adoption is not recommended at an advanced level of instruction. And now, dear colleagues, "*la parola a voi!*"

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### MULTILINGUALISM

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BLACKLEDGE, ADRIAN, & ANGELA CREESE. *Multilingualism*. London: Continuum, 2010. Pp. 255. \$49.95, paper. ISBN 978-0-8264-9209-8.

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*Multilingualism* is an important contribution to the study of bilingual education in the United Kingdom, with significant implications for the drafting of educational and legal language policy in other countries of the world having large immigrant or autochthonous language minorities. The authors adopt a carefully thought out theoretical perspective, and a well designed ethnographic research methodology, to study the use of four major heritage languages from the United Kingdom (Gujarati, Bengali, Chinese, Turkish) taught to children born to immigrant parents and grandparents in what the authors call "complementary" schools (i.e., nonstatutory schools which teach languages to children with familial and/or ancestral ties). In the United States these schools are known as heritage schools, for example, Chinese, Greek, Jewish, and so on. The project design is of four ethnographically informed case studies in which data was collected simultaneously by a team of nine researchers with extensive training in the ethnography of speaking. For each case study the researchers identified two schools (two Bengali schools in Birmingham, two Chinese schools in Manchester, two Gujarati schools in Leicester and two Turkish schools in London) where they observed, recorded, and interviewed participants, including observation of classrooms and assemblies, staff meetings, parents' evenings, prize giving and extramural school events. Some of the children were also visited at home. In all, the authors and their assistants collected an impressive array of

data derived from a variety of sources: 192 hours of audio-recorded interactional data, 168 sets of field notes, 16 hours of video recordings, and interviews with 66 key participants in the project.

The authors adopt a so-called postmodern "critical" perspective towards the study of bilingualism and multilingualism, based on the ideas of Bakhtin and his collaborators and disciples, addressed not only to researchers and scholars but also to language teachers, especially those arguing that the target language should be used in the classroom at all times. Focal to this approach is the notion that ethnicity, race, class, and, more importantly, language, are social constructions playing an important role in the creation of social difference. The book directly addresses theoretical, political, and pedagogical problems of bilingual and multilingual education in novel ways. For example, it attempts to dispel the belief that the use and visibility of minority languages in classrooms and other public spaces is problematic and causes educational failure and social segregation. Also, this book rejects the accepted notion that bilingualism is the same as the coexistence of parallel linguistic systems, what Heller and others call "double monolingualism" or bilingualism with diglossia. Instead, the authors of this book propose adopting the concept of "flexible bilingualism," that is, the simultaneous use of different languages, which is, in turn, based on the well-known concepts of "translanguaging" and "heteroglossia" proposed by García and Bailey, respectively.

This book will be of great interest to researchers, scholars and students of language policy (including pedagogical policy) and language rights, since it demonstrates convincingly that bilingual immigrants and their descendants possess multiple identifications and oftentimes they also have more than one transnational identity or sense of belonging. One cannot underestimate the important role such insights can play in teacher's classroom attitudes towards non-target languages as well as in determining language educational policy in countries where the choice of language of instruction is being disputed (e.g., Papiamentu Creole vs. Dutch in Aruba). Similarly, the insights about multiple identifications and transnational identities in this book can be of much value in court decisions dealing with official English and English-only legislation in the United States, where judging the validity of feelings, attitudes, and behaviors displayed by bilingual speakers and the linguistic naturalness (and hence the legality) of codeswitching in the workplace is at stake. Last but not least, high

school and college teachers and lecturers, who uncritically adopt the so-called communicative method for teaching foreign languages in schools and universities, where *only the use of the target language* (and the so-called standard variety to boot) is allowed in the classroom, should pay attention to this book, since, as the authors convincingly demonstrate, the language classroom is as much a medium of social and linguistic construction as it is an input–output language acquisition device. The authors offer important theoretical insights regarding language attitudes, identity, heritage, nationalism, ideology, power and the construction of self in the heritage language classroom. However, psycholinguists looking for significant insights concerning bilingual language development will be somewhat disappointed, since this book does not measure language development or proficiency in complementary schools (a topic that remains to be discovered). These comments should not be construed as negative criticism, since the authors did not aim to produce a psycholinguistics work. I strongly recommend *Multilingualism* to scholars and students of bilingualism and multilingualism, government officials, personnel and teachers involved in curriculum design and teaching methodology, and advocates of language rights in public forums and the legal system, since this book is not only well designed and thoroughly researched but also offers important theoretical insights and detailed descriptions of language attitudes by immigrants and their descendants in the classroom and outside of it. These insights should be heeded not only in the United Kingdom but also in other countries of the world where large numbers of immigrants and autochthonous language minorities reside.

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LYTRA, VALLY, & PETER MARTIN. (Eds.). *Sites of Multilingualism: Complementary Schools in Britain Today*. Stoke-on-Trent, England: Trentham Books, 2010. Pp. xx, 175. £22.99, paper. ISBN 978–1–85856–454–8.

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One area of research in the field of second language learning that has recently begun to receive increased attention is how heritage languages are acquired. This volume, although not directly related to the mechanisms of heritage language acquisition, presents a variety of descriptions of is-

suages and practices in British community schools where heritage languages are taught. These complementary schools are defined by the editors as non-mandatory schools that are established by specific ethnic minority communities, often for the promotion and maintenance of the community's language, religion, and/or culture. The volume's twelve chapters are organized along the lines of three main foci: language and literacy practices, processes of identity formation, and policy and practice.

The section on language and literacy practices begins with a contribution from Blackledge and Creese that examines the use of standard versus regional heritage language varieties in Bengali complementary schools in Birmingham. Based on observations and interviews, the researchers determine that while there is a concern, particularly on the part of the school, that the standard form of Bengali be kept separate from other varieties, both teachers and students make use of all of the linguistic resources they have at their disposal. In chapter 2, Lytra, Martin, Baraç, and Bhatt focus not just on the linguistic resources utilized in Turkish and Gujarati complementary school classrooms, but also on other modes of communication, such as images, writing, and gesture. By doing so, they gain a deeper understanding of classroom interactions. In the following chapter, Wei and Wu explore how teachers in Chinese complementary schools associate the teaching of literacy and specific linguistic structures to traditional Chinese social and cultural beliefs, even though students may prefer a more modern view of China. Sneddon's chapter 4 describes the partnership between an Albanian complementary school and a mainstream elementary school, and how this developing partnership allows children who attend both schools to feel that their language and culture are valued. In the last chapter of this section, Ruby, Gregory, Kenner, and Al-Azami go outside of the complementary school context to investigate how a grandmother from Bangladesh teaches Bengali to her grandchildren along with other neighborhood children.

The next section of the book, which concentrates on processes of identity formation among children attending complementary schools, opens with a chapter by Prokopiou and Cline that explores how these schools affect the development of students' cultural and academic identities. Based on their research in two complementary schools, one Greek and one Pakistani, they conclude that while the schools differ from each other in terms of the sociocultural context and specific goals, they both help

students gain a better understanding of their cultural identities. In chapter 7, Francis, Archer, and Mau find that students in a Chinese complementary school closely associate knowing Chinese with their ethnic identity, while in the next chapter, Souza focuses on the link between identity and language choice in her observations of how three children that attend a Brazilian Portuguese complementary school maintain their image of good Portuguese learners.

The theme of the final section of the book is policy and practice. In the first chapter of this section, Pantazi describes how a group of Greek complementary school teachers modify their ideas of appropriate pedagogy in order to better meet the needs of their students. In chapter 10, Helavaara Robertson focuses on the benefits of the development of links between complementary and mainstream schools by examining how teacher training students' perspectives on ethnic minority students in the mainstream classroom change positively after visiting a complementary school. Baradas's chapter discusses both opportunities and challenges for collaboration between Portuguese complementary schools and mainstream schools, based on recent policy initiatives in Britain. The book closes with a chapter by Conteh, in which she argues for a focus in the mainstream classroom on how each learner can develop his or her linguistic resources, whatever they may be, in a way that he or she can fully benefit from them.

This volume will primarily be of interest to those involved in teaching and administration in heritage language programs, both in mainstream and complementary schools. Its description of the policies and practices of complementary schools along with how these policies and practices affect teachers and students can contribute to a deeper understanding of the goals and outcomes of such programs, whether they are in Britain or elsewhere. The book may also be of interest to researchers in the area of heritage language acquisition, in that it draws attention to the social and cultural aspects of heritage language learning and emphasizes the relationship between learners' home language and their identity. The wide variety of complementary school contexts described in the volume allows the reader to see commonalities across these contexts, despite differences in the communities served by the schools. One common theme that recurs in the book is the tension between what parents and teachers desire for students in terms of cultural and linguistic learning, and what the children value. Another is the strong relationship between heritage language and identity, and how complementary schools help stu-

dents develop both. All of the chapters employ a heavily qualitative research methodology, with observations and interviews serving as the primary data sources. Because of this, readers looking to generalize to other contexts, or those who prefer a more quantitative approach may be disappointed. One negative aspect of the book regardless of preferred research methodology is the frequent use of acronyms and terminology specific to the British context. Many chapters incorporate references to government or educational agencies that will not be meaningful to a foreign reader without further explanation.

In summary, this volume makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the social and cultural aspects of heritage language learning in complementary schools, and while the research presented in the book is not necessarily generalizable to contexts beyond those described, it does motivate the investigation of similar issues in other heritage learning contexts while at the same time showing the need for policy makers and educators to take into consideration its findings.

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## SPANISH

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DE PRADA, MARISA, & PILAR MARCÉ. *Comunicación eficaz para los negocios: Curso de conversación, recursos y vocabulario*. Madrid, Spain: Edelsa Grupo Didascalía, 2010. Pp. 112. \$20.99, paper. ISBN 978-84-7711-700-1.

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De Prada and Marcé's *Comunicación eficaz para los negocios* (CEN) provides resources for facilitating the acquisition of effective second language (L2) communication skills in a Spanish-speaking business environment. The volume focuses on the presentation and use of key lexical items associated with various aspects of the business world and also provides pragmatically appropriate gambits to carry out conversations in business settings.

CEN is geared for students of Spanish at the CEFR level B (Independent Speaker, equivalent to Intermediate High/Advanced Low on the ACTFL scale) from diverse linguistic backgrounds. The book consists of ten chapters that treat business themes: *Montamos una empresa*, *Líderes y jefes*, *Participamos en una feria comercial*, *Lanzamos un producto*, *Logística y distribución*, *Exportamos*, *En el banco*, *Invertimos en Bolsa*, *expatriados profesionales*,

and *Responsabilidad social empresarial*. These chapters are followed by transcriptions of the listening passages on the audio CD and the answers to all the book's discrete-point exercises. These last two features allow learners to check their aural comprehension and get feedback on their answers to many of the book's exercises.

Each chapter contains the following sections: vocabulary, activating prior knowledge (brainstorming), entering into the theme, deepening (lexical) knowledge, paying attention, and effective conversation. The *Vocabulario* ('vocabulary') section contains two columns of decontextualized Spanish lexical items related to the theme of the chapter, which the student is told to translate into his/her native language in order to understand the meaning of these words throughout the chapter. The *Activa tus conocimientos* ('activate your knowledge') ask students leading questions to stimulate prior knowledge, for example, *¿Qué características consideras que ha de tener un emprendedor?* 'What characteristics do you believe an entrepreneur should have?'

The next two sections, *Entra en el tema* ('enter into the theme,') and *Profundiza* ('deepen [lexical] knowledge') both provide activities to help facilitate the *mapping* (binding) of form to meaning in intrasign relations and the deepening of the *depth of knowledge* dimension that recognizes the relatedness of words (intersign relations) as synonyms, antonyms, and semantically and derivationally related lexical items (Henrickson, B. [1999]. Three dimensions of vocabulary development. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 21[2], 303–18). The first of these sections (*Entra en el tema*) focuses on basic definitions of terms to be used throughout the chapter and often requires learners to work with synonyms of those terms or group words semantically (e.g., semantic mapping), notice derivational relationships (e.g., *feria* 'fair' [noun] vs. *ferial* adj. form), match words with their descriptive definitions, insert new items appropriately into lengthy definitions of new terms or into authentic texts that have been modified for pedagogical purposes by the authors, and summarize passages.

The next section (*Profundiza*) helps learners solidify their knowledge of new words by processing these items more deeply, e.g., recycling new vocabulary in different contexts, putting actions in chronological order, categorizing, titling paragraphs, and choosing the appropriate word from a selection of possibilities at various points in a text. In addition, students engage in activities that will facilitate their attainment of Advanced level proficiency, such as using extended prose, mak-

ing inferences beyond the facts given (e.g., students are asked to characterize the type of investor [conservative, moderate, aggressive] that would be more comfortable with specific types of investments), expressing their own ideas and justifying their opinions, comparing and contrasting ideas, and solving problems. Moreover, students are asked to think about the big picture, for example, the social consequences on the family unit when employees are sent abroad). This section also fosters communication among learners, who are encouraged to compare their opinions with those of other students.

In the *Presta atención* ('pay attention') section learners are often asked to insert appropriate vocabulary from a list into a modified authentic text (usually taken from the Internet) or choose the most appropriate term from various options given to fill certain blanks in the text. They then listen to the same passage read by a native speaker of Peninsular Spanish on the CD to check their answers and internalize the positive or negative feedback provided by that process.

The *Conversación eficaz* ('effective conversation') section found at the end of each chapter provides learners with gambits (e.g., functional phrases for opening and closing conversations, asking/giving advice, expressing agreement/disagreement) and opportunities to put their new lexical and pragmatic knowledge into practice in role-plays simulating workplace interchanges (e.g., a banker counseling someone who has been the victim of credit card fraud, a financial advisor counseling someone how to invest a new inheritance).

The pedagogical approach of this text meant for a second language audience is somewhat different from that of *Éxito comercial* (EC; Doyle, M., Fryer, T. B., & Cere, R. [2010]. *Éxito comercial*. 5th ed. Boston: Cengage) or *En activo: Practical Business Spanish* (EA; Santamaría Iglesias, E. & Jones, H. [2008]. *En activo: Practical Business Spanish*. New York: Routledge), which were created for English-speaking foreign language learners of Spanish who may lack cultural knowledge about the Spanish-speaking world (Spain and Latin America) and still need grammatical help to carry out the pragmatic functions required in a workplace environment. The focus on Peninsular Spanish, the lack of grammatically focused presentations and activities, and the dearth of cultural content in CEN indicate that it may be geared to a well-educated European audience that is already familiar with Spanish culture and who is assumed to possess a level of proficiency that does not require specific grammatical practice in order

to express carry out the communicative functions presented in this book. In addition, CEN assumes that learners already possess quite a bit of knowledge about business, which is necessary for students to carry out successfully many of the book's activities.

Some shortcomings of CEN include its lack of resources to help with the understanding of new words in context (e.g., graphics and pictures from business contexts, cultural information), an absence of models of appropriate ways to carry out conversations in business settings (e.g., workplace dialogues in DVD video format), and the lack of additional practice of new material (e.g., Internet-based activities). These features contrast with the contextualized presentation of vocabulary and the use of audio and video conversational models from various parts of the Spanish-speaking world and Internet-based ancillary activities provided by other Spanish business texts (e.g., *EC* and *CA*).

In sum, this book on Business Spanish exemplifies some of the best practices for facilitating the acquisition of L2 vocabulary, as outlined in Lafford, B., Lafford, P., & Sykes, J. (2005). *Entre dicho y hecho . . . : An assessment of the application of second language acquisition and related research to the creation of Spanish CALL materials for lexical acquisition. CALICO Journal, 24*(3) 497–529. However, due to its lack of cultural information, model conversational dialogues from Spanish-speaking business environments, and grammatical practice, in the United States CEN would best used as an ancillary text to a more comprehensive textbook package in a course geared toward advanced-level Spanish students, who also have some basic understanding of the field of business.

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TACELOSKY, KATHLEEN, RUTH A. KAUFFMAN, & DENISE M. OVERFIELD. *Diálogos: Hacia una Comunidad Global*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2010. Pp. xv, 165. \$66.67, paper. ISBN 978-0205-64394-3.

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This book, designed to be completed in one academic semester, is an intermediate Spanish language text for college students. As emphasized in the preface, the authors' goal is to "encourage the growth of an awareness of global issues, high-

lighting our interconnectedness to each other in spite of distance and cultural differences" (p. xi), which shows the integration of the National Standards for Foreign Language Education, especially the connections and communities standards. The text's emphasis is on communicative language learning through meaningful interactions among students, who have multiple opportunities to engage in the three modes of communication. In this sense, the book includes tasks focused on interpersonal communication, through which students can interact orally in a variety of contexts; presentational communication through writing; and interpretive communication through reading and listening comprehension of a variety of authentic texts.

The textbook contains 5 chapters: (a) *Nos presentamos*, (b) *La niñez: Una etapa fundamental*, (c) *La importancia de la salud*, (d) *Entre la vida y la muerte*, and (e) *El dinero y las finanzas*. Each chapter is divided into various sections: *conexión personal, expresión cultural, contexto global, reflexión, ampliando el conocimiento con experiencia*, and *explicaciones gramaticales*. These chapters are focused on themes relevant to college students interested in global and cultural issues. At the end of the text there are three appendices designed to help students when engaging in the writing process: one with general instructions and guidelines for the compositions in each chapter, one with a sample outline to be used as a model when students plan their compositions, and one with a sample composition written based on the sample outline. In addition, a companion Web site provides additional instructional materials, including downloadable grammar exercises, Web resources, and streaming audio for each chapter. There is also a downloadable Instructor Resource Manual, accessible with a login name and password, which can be requested from the publishing company.

In the first section of each chapter, *conexión personal*, the authors provide a meaningful way to activate students' background knowledge by drawing on their personal experiences and connections to the topic. One of the major strengths of this text is that the tasks are designed to be completed individually, in pairs, or in small groups, and are focused around students' personal lives and experiences, which guides students through their thinking process and provides them with multiple opportunities to think about the theme before reading and listening about it.

The second section, *expresión cultural*, provides an opportunity for students to read authentic

texts that tackle the topic discussed. Although the texts are written by various authors from the Spanish-speaking world, it would have been interesting to see authors from more countries and backgrounds represented so that students could be further exposed to different perspectives. In addition, it might have helped focus students' learning about these authors' perspectives had there been tasks prompting students to research the authors' backgrounds and the contexts in which they wrote their texts to further enhance students' understanding and reflection upon the topics.

The third section, *contexto global*, includes oral accounts by native speakers, who discuss some aspect of the topics presented and relate them to their personal experience. These audios are a valuable way to expose students to various accents as well as real-life experiences of people of different backgrounds. Another highlight of the book is the design of the listening tasks. These always include pre-listening activities, which help focus students' attention, listening activities, which vary between listening for gist and listening for specific information, and post-listening activities, which provide opportunities for students to connect what they heard to their own personal experiences.

The fourth section, *reflexión*, provides further opportunities for students to reflect upon the topic and express their thoughts through writing. The writing tasks are designed following a process approach and include a pre-writing section, where students are prompted to brainstorm ideas for their composition and write an outline, a writing section, which includes revision instances with peer and teacher feedback, and a post-writing section, where students are encouraged to engage in self-feedback and final revision of their compositions. This emphasis on the writing process is extremely valuable and well designed, although it would have helped to see an appendix with guidelines for peer feedback.

The fifth section, *ampliando el conocimiento con experiencia*, focuses on students' active involvement in their communities through suggested service learning projects. Although these types of tasks provide valuable opportunities for students to become engaged with their communities, some of the suggested projects might be difficult or even impossible to carry out due to lack of resources and/or variations in the settings where students are studying. Instead of including one or two possible service projects in the textbook itself, it might have been more valuable to include a wider vari-

ety of suggested service projects in the Instructor's Manual so that instructors could select the ones relevant to their instructional contexts and then assign them to their classes.

Finally, the sixth section, *explicaciones gramaticales*, provides explanations of the grammar points students need to use and apply in the chapter. Although there are no exercises specifically designed to foster practice and application of these grammar topics, they are successfully integrated into the chapters, as students will most likely use them when engaging in the three modes of communication through the suggested tasks. Further, more explicit grammar practice exercises are provided in the companion Web site for those instructors that want to include them in their instructional planning.

Overall, this book provides a viable alternative for intermediate-level Spanish classes that have a strong emphasis on service and community engagement. Instructors will benefit from the variety of well-designed communicative tasks and the multiple opportunities to foster student discussion and reflection upon relevant, contemporary cultural topics that will probably spark students' interest and engagement.

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## TESTING

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FULCHER, GLENN. *Practical Language Testing*. London: Hodder Education, An Hachette UK Company, 2010. Pp. xvi, 352. £19.99 paper. ISBN 978-0-340-98448-2.

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Written by Glenn Fulcher, reader in education (TESOL, University of Leicester, UK), past president of the International Language Testing Association (2006), co-editor of *Language Testing*, and author of numerous articles and books on testing, this volume is a noteworthy analytical and critical compendium of the extant research on the practical aspects of standardized language testing.

*Practical Language Testing* contains ten chapters in which the author provides a comprehensive and comprehensible account of all of the facets involved in what may seem to be the arcane process of standardized testing. In fact, the good language teacher and the good language learner should have a clear notion of the purposes, functions, and formats of testing so that they

understand them better. Large scale standardized tests are what Fulcher labels “high stakes” tests, that is, tests with a significant impact on the test taker, the institution, and society (pp. 3, 321).

In the first chapter, the author points out that language assessment serves multiple functions in areas such as education, employment, international mobility, language planning, and economic policy making (p. 1). Testing may be formative, that is, it informs language instruction and acquisition. Likewise, it may also be summative, that is, it provides a way of determining achievement and proficiency, frequently for certification (pp. 2–3).

Fulcher then poses the most significant question of the entire book: “Why do such tests exist?” (p. 4). First and foremost, testing is part of a decision-making process. More precisely, it is a means for implementing social and political values. Ideally, testing should contribute to equality of opportunity in a meritocratic society to ensure that people are judged only on performance and ability in a fair and equitable manner and not for other reasons (birthright, economic privilege, randomness).

The second chapter addresses standardized testing, which has become ubiquitous in this era of accountability. Since the public now demands precise measurement of scholastic progress and achievement, various organizations produce standardized tests intended to measure these results scientifically. Two paradigms exist: (a) norm-referenced testing, or the measurement of performance based on comparison of one person to others taking the same test; and (b) criterion-referenced testing, or the interpretation of scores according to predetermined standards of absolute performance. This chapter contains some technical material on standardized testing, but it is not beyond the grasp of the typical reader.

In the third chapter on classroom assessment, the author talks about various aspects including assessment for learning, peer-assessment, self-assessment, dynamic assessment, dependability, and the need for an underlying theory of assessment.

In the remaining seven chapters, Fulcher discusses the multiple dimensions of second-language testing. Chapter 4 thus introduces the essential notion of the test design cycle (p. 94) with its eight sequenced stages: (a) test purpose; (b) test criterion; (c) construct definition; (d) task/item design: specification writing; (e) evaluating, prototyping and piloting; (f) field testing and assembly into the final format; (g) inferences; and (h) decisions, though it focuses only on the first three.

Chapter 5 addresses actual test specifications including those for the item or task, evidence, test assembly, presentation, and delivery.

The sixth chapter is concerned with the evaluating, prototyping, and piloting of test items. Of special interest in this chapter is the selective transcription of an actual sample of four participants engaged in a collaborative discussion of a single test item (pp. 162–172) together with Fulcher’s enlightening annotation.

Chapter 7 details the scoring of tests. Because machine scoring of multiple-choice items is mechanical and inexpensive, it facilitates scoring. The scoring of constructed response tasks may involve holistic, primary-trait scales, or multiple-trait scoring, which is more time consuming and may raise issues of reliability. Noteworthy is Fulcher’s discussion of automated scoring for written and speaking tasks since many teachers remain skeptical about its value and meaning (pp. 216–218).

Chapter 8 deals with the alignment of tests to standards. The fact that the notion “standard” has multiple meanings represents one significant problem (pp. 225–226). Among the issues discussed in this chapter are the use of standards for harmonization and identity, performance level descriptors, standard-setting methodologies, evaluation of standard setting, and training.

The penultimate chapter addresses test administration, which includes the control of extraneous variables, the use of rituals, standardization of conditions and training, planned variation (people who require specific accommodations because of special needs or disabilities), unplanned variation (cheating), scoring procedures and their moderation, data handling and policy, and the reporting of the outcomes to the stakeholders.

The last chapter on testing and teaching discusses the effects of standardized tests on teaching and learning (“washback”), which may be negative or positive. In the latter case, a standardized test has constructive outcomes, that is, it may enhance the curriculum, improve teaching methodology, encourage greater coverage of skills and content. In the former case, however, an individual instructor may “teach to the test” without considering its overall negative ramifications.

Finally, Fulcher reminds the reader that the selection and use of standardized tests requires a consideration of the following elements: (a) test purpose, (b) test taker characteristics, (c) domain of interest, (d) constructs of interest, (e) validity, (f) parallel or equated forms, (g) test administration and practicality, and (h) impact (pp. 292–294).

Each of the ten chapters has an “Activities” section to offer the reader extensive practical application of the previously elaborated principles. These exercises are not rote because they require thoughtful and deliberate contemplation. Fulcher’s lucid writing style makes the purposes, processes, and procedures involved in testing comprehensible, while, simultaneously, making the reader aware of its intricacy and complexity. Furthermore, his deft use of metaphor (architecture, engines, and so forth) makes his points clear and precise.

The appendices are quite useful: (a) Table of z-scores; (b) Gaokao (National College Entrance Test, China) conversion table; (c) The individual linguality test; (d) Service encounters in the C[ommon] E[uropean] F[ramework] of R[eference]; (e) Fluency rating scale; and

(f) Suggested answers for selected activities in the text proper. A useful glossary, an extensive reference section, and a valuable index complement this excellent reference tool. Fulcher also refers the reader (p. xv) to his informative Web site: <http://languagetesting.info>, which contains a rich variety of invaluable resources related to testing (videos, features, articles, links, podcasts, scenarios, statistics, and so forth).

Most second-language instructors recommend that prospective language teachers acquire and develop a personal professional library (dictionaries, grammars, textbooks, CDs) during their undergraduate and graduate education. Fulcher’s book should be one of those volumes.

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