

Book Reviews

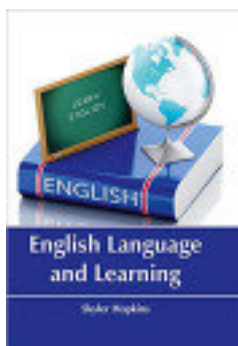
English Language and Learning

New York: Larsen and Keller Education. (354 pages)

Skyler Hopkins (Ed.). (2017).

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Language learning has come a long way in the last couple of decades. There is an increasingly common understanding in academia that a new language cannot be mastered unless it is acquired. Rote learning methods which were part of early school learning are now becoming obsolete. In the present scenario, the task/role of a language teacher is to present the target language to the learner in a way so as to engage her/him in learning. Language learning is a continuous process and it cannot be fixed in a time frame. In fact, to learn a language in a limited time frame is not possible. So a teacher's role is to develop an understanding, a flavour for the language. The book *English Language and Learning* by Skyler Hopkins addresses this issue quite technically.

Chapter 1 "Introduction to English Language", begins with the history of English and gives a brief account of the language from its Proto-Germanic form to Modern English. The author then moves on to the current geographical distribution of English and talks about the global as well as the local spread of English. The introduction presents an overall view of English, from its origin, spread, variety and growth across the globe. All of this is done through a very brief

introduction to phonology-to-syntax of English. The discussion is not extensive but is fairly exhaustive, and touches on all the relevant grammatical concepts. The latter half of the chapter deals with differentiating between old and middle English, and British and American English. The chapter ends with a description of the status of English across the world.

Chapter 2 "Understanding Learning" deals with the process of multi-level learning in a diverse setting. The chapter includes some of the most influential learning theories. The author also looks at formal and informal learning through different types of conditioning, habituation and sensitization, with a view to provide a psychological understanding of the process of learning, which can then be applied to a heterogeneous classroom.

When it comes to writing or reading a grammar book, the first impression that comes to mind is that the book will follow a formal pattern of using minimum description, and the concepts will be illustrated with the help of examples for each grammatical category. But Chapter 3 entitled "English Grammar: An Integrated Study" is written in a style wherein concepts such as open and closed class, tense, mood, clause construction, and voice are explained through mitigating boundaries. Contrary to the traditional way of placing grammatical categories in a fixed setting, the writer has described them in her own peculiar way.

Chapter 4 titled "Challenges in Learning English as a Second Language" addresses the basic issues of learning a second language. It takes into account the problems related to vocabulary, pronunciation and sentence formation. The chapter also includes topics such as English as a Second/Foreign language, first language, and second-language acquisition.