

Book Reviews

Interaction and Second Language Development: A Vygotskian Perspective

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R. A. van Compernelle (2015)

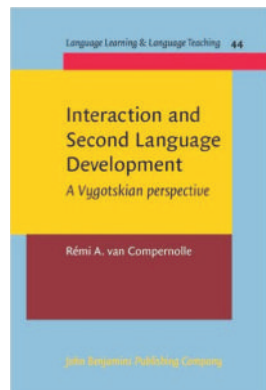
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Reviewed by: **L. Devaki**

This book re-conceptualizes the link between the role of interaction and second language (L2) development from the perspective of socio-cultural theory. It starts by critiquing the two interactionist traditions—the cognitive interactionist tradition in which interaction is conceptualized as an environmental trigger and the social interactionist tradition where interaction is situated in the external world. A third position is also proposed in which interactionism constitutes the dialectical unity between the external social world and individual mental functioning. This dialectal perspective pervades the book. In fact, the second chapter expands on this perspective by discussing the concept of communicative interactions as a



mediational tool and the notion of internalization and the zone of proximal development in the context of mediated performance. Additionally, the role of micro-discourse analysis is discussed as an approach to understanding interactions and L2 development.

In the subsequent six chapters, the author discusses six different themes of interactions, retaining the emphasis on the dialectical perspective.

In Chapter 3, van Compernelle examines the role of communicative interaction in the L2 development process. He takes the perspective that L2 is not a readymade linguistic system to be acquired, but a process of integrating and gaining control over psychological tools. He is concerned mainly with the bidirectional process of internalization of mediational means. In this sense, communicative interaction is both a source and a driver of the developmental process.

In Chapter 4, the author deals with the relation between interaction and negotiation of meaning. Interaction is seen as a joint activity (as opposed to seeing it as occurring in the external context). Interaction entails negotiation of meaning. Again, negotiation of meaning is not something that happens in an individual's mind. It is co-regulated implicitly as in the case of inter-subjectivity processes and explicitly in the case of seeking appropriate conversational support.

In Chapter 5, the author discusses the role of first language interaction in L2 development. Here, the discussion focuses on how first language serves as an optimal tool, mediating the internalization of L2 meaning. This

position is contrary to the received wisdom that maintains that L2 development occurs when it is used exclusively.

In Chapter 6, the author deals with the roles of participation and active reception in L2 development, with a focus on the classroom and pedagogical context. He highlights how and why communicative events need to be understood in terms of how participants use the resources (language, gestures and objects) at their disposal. The inadequacies of the traditional notions of speakers and hearers for understanding interactions are also highlighted.

In Chapter 7, the relation between interactionism and L2 development in the context of dynamic assessment is explored.

The mediational nature of interaction competence that is co-produced through a variety of tools forms the theme of Chapter 8. The theme addresses the issue of supporting interactions through new mediational means.

In the ninth chapter, the author concludes by synthesizing and providing directions for further research and pedagogy.

In this book, the theoretical, methodological and analytical discussions are directly linked to pedagogical implications in each chapter. It also provides relevant excerpts at various points that help readers to engage with the concept under discussion. The data sessions given at the end of the chapter are useful for practical engagement with the themes. Video clips of a few data sessions (Session Nos.: 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7) are available at <https://benjamins.com/#catalog/books/lllt.44/video>. The questions that accompany the data sessions provide clear analytical directions that are helpful for those who are interested in undertaking an interactional analysis from a socio-cultural perspective. This makes the book extremely useful to a variety of

audience such as researchers working in socio-cultural tradition, scholars working in second language acquisition outside the framework of socio-cultural theory, students working in second language as well as socio-cultural traditions and lastly second language teachers.

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Never Lonely Again

New York, NY:
Random House

Hans Wilhelm (1988)

Reviewed by:

Meenakshi Khar



Stimulating children's literature motivates children to share their experiences with others. The most effective impact is that children learn to resolve their conflicts and issues by relating to them and thinking critically. Children find connections among books, and relate the books to their own lives.

Never Lonely Again is a children's story book, written and illustrated by Hans Wilhelm. The story is presented by Waldo, a shaggy dog who is loved by children. It is a touching story of a squirrel, Chestnut, who has nothing exciting to look forward to in life. He feels lonely because he has no friends. This makes him listless and unenthusiastic about life. The story is a sensitive portrayal of what it means to be lonely, an issue that is generally not associated with young children