

Input, interaction, and corrective feedback in L2 learning.

Alison Mackay. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. 2012. Pp. v +144.

The interaction approach, fueled by interaction-based research in second language acquisition (SLA), has come a long way since it was first proposed during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Researchers have advanced from verifying the positive effects of interaction on second language learning (e.g., Ellis et al. 1994; Long, 1980, 1983; Mackey & Goo, 2007; Swain, 1985) to investigating the internal characteristics of interaction by uncovering the multiple dimensions that are involved in more detail (Long, 1996) and updating constructs and coding systems (Kowal & Swain, 1994). The depth and breadth of information that interaction-based research has generated, as portrayed throughout this book, has helped both researchers and language instructors further understand the conditions under which interaction may benefit instructed SLA. One of the variables that can be manipulated and observed in such interactional settings is feedback, which is emphasized throughout the book as the author's main research focus.

The author builds a comprehensive analysis of the interactional approach and its foundations based on her 15 years of research experience in the field. Her main goals are to provide an overview of interaction-based research and to discuss the findings and descriptions of the methodologies used for the studies. The organization of the book unfolds thematically, with chapters that identify and highlight specific aspects of the approach. The author groups the eight chapters of the book into four parts. As initial steps into the topic, the first two chapters introduce the theoretical foundations and methodological approaches used in interaction-based research. These chapters offer an historical review of the development of this approach, useful definitions of important constructs and concepts, as well as current research topics. Additionally, well-established as well as new elicitation methods used in this type of research are surveyed, offering many important considerations, specifically in relation to social factors. Chapters three and four analyze the role of context in interaction research and the differences between laboratory conditions and classroom conditions. They also analyze the ways in which interaction research can be applied to the classroom through tasks, as in task-based language teaching (TBLT) and focus-on-form instruction (FFI). Chapters five and six focus on current trends in interaction research, and consider learner differences such as age and cognitive abilities. Chapters seven and eight, the final section, place the findings of interaction-based research within the wider framework of second language acquisition studies and propose future directions for this type of research.

The theoretical foundations laid down in chapter one are introduced by defining *interaction* and the historical development of this construct. The author focuses on explaining and supporting the direct link established between interactional processes and second language acquisition. This is followed by an account of new directions that this type of research is currently taking, in an effort to further elucidate how interaction aids second language learning. Once the case for the interaction approach is made, the author reviews important concepts and constructs that are fundamental to the understanding of interaction dynamics and its principles. Following this introduction, chapter two delves into methodological considerations, elicitation techniques, and research innovations in the field. The author describes the interactive task first and establishes it as the most common type of elicitation procedure in interaction-based learning research, offering a useful classification for this research protocol. As part of the methodological

challenges to consider in this chapter, important issues are mentioned in relation to operationalizing development, targeting specific linguistic structures and analyzing learners' introspections and perceptions. Regarding the latter, the author offers descriptions of tasks that can be used to tap into learners' experience, such as the use of stimulated recall, think-aloud protocols, uptake charts, and priming. The author closes this methodological analysis by pointing out that until recently little attention had been placed on cultural and social factors (i.e., learner-external variables) in the field of interaction-based learning.

In chapter three, the author presents an analysis of issues related to the research settings used in interaction-based studies, emphasizing the fundamental difference between laboratory and classroom conditions. The author addresses concerns regarding the generalizability of results obtained under laboratory conditions and how those findings may (or may not) transfer to classroom conditions. She offers suggestions, especially regarding contextual variables relating to instructors, learners, and setting, as well as opportunities for feedback, noticing, and uptake. Mackay ends the chapter by analyzing cultural aspects of appropriacy and interlocutor effects. Chapter four presents an overview of how interaction research can be applied to language classrooms. To this end, the author analyzes the effects of tasks in depth (i.e., one-way vs. two-way, closed vs. open, convergent vs. divergent, focused vs. unfocused, among other proposed categories) and how they may impact second language learning. These findings support task-based language teaching (TBLT) and focus on form instruction (FFI) as means through which the interaction approach may be implemented. Finally, aspects of planning time and familiarity are analyzed as they shed light on the link between interaction and task effects on instructed SLA.

The relationship between age and feedback (i.e., how interaction impacts second language development of both young children and older adults), a currently popular area of interaction research, is introduced in chapter five. The author reviews studies involving children and older adults, as these two groups are becoming increasingly important for different reasons proposed by the author. Regarding children, the author reviews how they can successfully participate as well as give and respond to feedback, thus concluding that they may benefit in a similar way from interaction-driven learning when compared to adults, notwithstanding certain differences. The author then mentions certain aspects that must be considered when conducting interaction-based research with children. For example, previous research suggests that children display unpredictable task behavior and limited attention span. Another relevant aspect to consider for this type of research is the control over specific task-implementation factors, such as planning time, familiarity with the task, and guidance to complete the task. Regarding older learners, Mackay emphasizes the lack of this type of research, especially with 65+ year-old participants. The author argues that older adults will become an important group in the next 40 years and that second language learning may be a cognitively challenging activity for this age group. Chapter six moves on to analyze individual differences at the cognitive level, specifically in terms of the roles of memory and attention in interaction-driven learning. The author reviews models of working memory, and how working memory can be operationalized and measured. In her review, the author emphasizes the importance of memory in interaction-based research, while stating, however, that age plays a crucial role in modulating it.

In chapter seven, the author discusses current views on interaction-based research constructs within second language acquisition studies. Thus, interactional modifications such as clarifying incomprehensible input, being provided with negative feedback and/or positive

evidence, producing modified output, and noticing ‘gaps’ can provide opportunities for learners to restructure their interlanguage. Finally, chapter eight introduces us to the question of where interaction-based research is heading: the area involving socio-affective factors. Mackay calls for interdisciplinary collaboration, along with theoretical developments and finer methodological techniques. The author ends this chapter by explaining the ways in which social and cognitive aspects can be expanded within the interaction research framework, and she provides an analysis of pedagogical applications.

This book features detailed analyses and solid views about the development and future directions of this type of research. As the book clearly illustrates from the beginning, the state of development of this fruitful area of research is now turning to individual and social variables that may help further understand how interaction affects second language learning. Perhaps one drawback, which was pointed out by the author herself, is that the organization of the book into themes called for the same publications to be cited in various chapters. However, the comprehensive, careful, and systematic analysis of the existing literature rendered the occurrence of such repetitions irrelevant. Finally, this book can be of great help to those interested in expanding their knowledge of interaction-based research and its multiple uses and applications, as the author offers a useful, current bibliography.

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