BOOK REVIEWS

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Speaking in a Second Language

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The volume *Speaking in a Second Language*, edited by Rosa Alonso Alonso, represents an excellent contribution to the area of L2 research that addresses L2 speaking from an updated and innovative perspective. The volume is updated since it discloses research on L2 speaking meeting current times and real learners' needs, and it is innovative, as Lynda Yates (this volume) suggests, since it approaches research on L2 speaking from various perspectives. The volume is structured in ten chapters that address timely research insights as regards L2 speaking. The academic contributions presented in this volume offer readers a distinct and comprehensive view of L2 speaking that certainly will enrich researchers and language teachers.

In addition to these ten chapters, the volume also includes a "Preface" by professor Lynda Yates, who revisits language teaching practices as regards L2 speaking and invites readers to reflect on how the skill of speaking has been traditionally understood (both in teaching and research) and how it has evolved over the years. Furthermore, Yates provides an overview of the different chapters of the volume and indicates that the authors view language as a human endeavour, in which language is understood as multi-faceted, dynamic as well as embodied, and speaking as socially and context dependent. Current issues concerning L2 speaking, such as multimodality and multilingualism, are recognised in this volume, which implies an important change in the way L2 speaking has been traditionally treated. In fact, in today's world, multimodality and multilingualism should be seen as integrative entities as they reflect how communication (e.g., L1, L2, etc.) is constructed and deconstructed. On the one hand,

from a multimodal perspective, L2 speakers employ different semiotic resources or communicative modes that allow them to create meaning, and therefore meaning can be explored by attending to those resources (see Jewitt et al. 2016). On the other hand, assuming that the world is multilingual and that speakers may possess a full linguistic repertoire, the multilingual phenomenon and the role it plays in L2 acquisition cannot be overlooked (see Ruiz de Zarobe and Ruiz de Zarobe 2015). Multimodality and multilingualism are two complex phenomena that should be carefully explored in the area of L2 speaking and, although this volume sheds some light upon these aspects, further research is needed. To put if briefly, as this volume suggests, research on L2 speaking has evolved over the years, but there is still much work to do, and it is our responsibility as researchers to share insights with language teachers in order to narrow the gap between research and teaching in order to improve the quality of L2 teaching and meet current demands.

Chapter one,

by Geeslin, Gudmestad, Kanwit, Linford, Long, Schmidt and Solon, provides a current state-of-the-art on research on sociolinguistic competence and L2 research, focusing particularly on sociolinguistic variation and L2 speaking. As the authors claim, the development of L2 sociolinguistic competence is crucial to construct successful communicative outcomes. This perspective goes beyond traditional approaches to L2 speaking which tend to rely mainly on lin-

guistic competence. The authors report that native speakers manage to provide information about their identity and membership to specific communities by means of specific structures that are adjusted to their interlocutors and the context of interaction, and interlocutors do the same over the course of an interaction to reach communicative purposes. These adjustments are also discussed in the area of pragmatic competence in terms of sociopragmatics (see Taguchi and Roever 2017), and L2 learners need to master this knowledge in order to use language appropriately. Research on sociolinguistic variation with native speakers reveals the context-dependent nature of language, which in turn reinforces the necessity for L2 learners to acquire sociolinguistic competence. The authors also discuss current issues within sociolinguistic competence, specifically, the role of lexical frequency, geographical variation, and learners' attitudes towards a specific language (variety). Finally, drawing on research insights and theories related to sociolinguistics, they present a research-informed approach to teaching L2 speaking in the language classroom.

Chapter two,

by van Compernolle, addresses L2 speaking from a different angle. The author, taking a Vygotskian perspective, centres on the development of L2 speaking within interactional competence, seen as a situated activity in which L2 speakers draw on specific contextually communicative resources to create a shared mental space where interaction takes place. Broadly speaking, interactional competence involves not only learning which resources are available and how to use them appropriately, but also one's competence in using relevant resources for a particular context. Drawing on previous research (Rine, 2009), van Compernolle (2015) proposes a model of interactional competence consisting of topic management, action sequencing, participants framework, turn-taking, and register. Among these components, in this study, the author focuses on register, specifically on sociopragmatics in French and Spanish, and explores how interactional competence can be developed in the language classroom through concept-based pragmatics instruction (CBPI). The author illustrates the pedagogical potential of CBPI with various examples taken from previous research and discusses interactional competence in terms of learners' orientations to communication as well as their ability to execute and control orientations in L2 interactions, text-based chat and written discourse completion tasks. Further research and new pedagogical treatments involve, as van Compernolle argues, expanding CBPI to deal with the different domains of interactional competence.

In chapter three,

Stam acknowledges the multimodal nature of communication (see Jewitt et al. 2016) by addressing L2 speaking from a holistic perspective. The author views gestures as

an integral part of speaking and argues that speaking is dynamic and involves an action. Stam provides a literature review that centres on different types of gestures (i.e., co-speech gestures, speech-linked gestures and emblems) and on the role of gesture in L2 speaking. Co-speech gestures refer to spontaneous hand movements that are co-expressed with speech and have cognitive and communicative functions since they may complement what the speaker says and relieve cognitive load. Speech-linked gestures and emblems, although different, occur with some sort of conscious awareness. The former types of gestures are asynchronous with speech and try to fill a gap or a grammatical slot in a sentence (e.g., searching for words). By contrast, the latter are culturally specific, conventionalised, and translatable (e.g., thumbs up) and are commonly known in specific communities. In addition to this, concerning gestures in L2 speaking, the author discusses that relation in terms of assessment, communicative competence, emblems and learners' gestures and their functions (see Stam 2013). Finally, research agenda for gesture research in native speaker and L2 learners, and future directions in terms of L2 pedagogy are presented.

Chapter four,

by Eskildsen and Markee focuses on the nature of L2 speaking as a social accomplishment from a conversationalist and multimodal perspective (see Mondada 2016 for a review on multimodality and conversation analysis). The authors, as Stam does in this volume, recognise the multimodal turn of speaking, which briefly consists of an interplay of various semiotic resources. As the authors claim, language is understood as a repertoire for social action, and language, cognition and learning are socially distributed, co-constructed, embodied and embedded in local situations. Bearing in mind those aspects, Eskildsen and Markee, following a conversation analysis perspective (a spin-off of ethnomethodology), make research claims as regards L2 speaking as a social endeavour and provide insights into talk-in-interaction as a social accomplishment. To do so, the authors examine various examples coming from different settings that illustrate how speakers' interactional features shape talk-in-interaction and achieve communicative purposes. Drawing on these examples, the authors evidence the complexity of L2 talk, show the locally situated nature of speaking and show that language, cognition and learning are embedded in the specific circumstances of talk, distributed across the various speakers, and embodied. Finally, the authors also show that L2 speaking involves speakers drawing on interlocutor's actions, navigate local ecologies, and use a variety of semiotic resources to accomplish talk-in-interaction.

In chapter five,

Lowie, Verspoor and van Dijk explore the acquisition of L2 speaking from the perspective of the complex dynamic sys-

tems theory (CDTS), which focuses on the process rather than on the product itself and recognises learner's variability over time. According to the CDTS, L2 speaking is not based on innate language specific abilities, but rather on a complex synergy of noticing, interaction and self-reflection that emerges over time. The authors further claim that L2 speaking, as a result of its emergent nature and complexity, is not only variable among learners but also within the same learner over time, which makes prediction as regards attainment complicated. The authors carry out a study with two twins with similar levels of proficiency and similar previous experiences to explore intra-learner variability and inter-learner variation in development. They examine participants' developmental patterns when performing similar tasks over a period of 8 months on two very robust measures that reflect syntactic and lexical development. Results reveal that the linguistic behaviour is highly variable despite the robust measurements and the two general linguistic variables. Furthermore, results suggest that even when all the possible variables are controlled, participants' behaviour can vary. Future implications and recommendations could be to promote continuous assessment (versus single oral exams), meet learners' needs and challenges, and to understand L2 instruction as language couching.

Chapter six,

by Gilquin, offers an explanatory study set in the field of Applied Construction Grammar that attempts to identify recurrent sequences in L2 speaking from higher intermediate to advanced proficiency levels. Data for the study are taken from a specific learner spoken corpus, Louvain International Database of Spoken English Interlanguage (LINDSEI, Gilquin et al. 2010). The methodology of this study involves analysing part-of-speech tags sequences from the LINDSEI corpus and the Louvain Corpus of Native English Conversation (LOCNEC, De Cock 2004). Interestingly, this study takes an innovative perspective since it attempts to use part-of-speech tag sequences to explore construction. The author not only discusses the results of the study but also some methodological issues. On the one hand, as the study shows, learners and native speakers commonly employed basic noun phrases. Furthermore, compared to native speakers, learners' data reveal that they seemed to rely more on coordinated constructions and position adverbs in a different way. On the other hand, although the methodology followed may have some limitations, it has served to provide new insights as regards recurrent constructions of L2 speakers. Definitely, this study can provide language teachers with relevant information as regards learners' constructions which, in turn, contribute to developing in a more accurate manner L2 speaking practices.

In chapter seven,

Bygate offers a more pedagogically-oriented contribution that clearly provides fruitful insights into L2 teaching and

research. Particularly, the author claims that L2 speaking requires special attention and argues for creating pedagogical spaces to meet that learning necessity. Drawing on previous research, the author states that speaking and writing are different as regards the processing skills L2 learners need, and as regards patterns of written and spoken discourse. Although this may influence instruction and curriculum planning, Bygate does not suggest that L2 speaking should be separated from other language skills (see Norris et al. 2017). In fact, creating pedagogical spaces implies providing learners with appropriate opportunities and conditions for participating in tasks that are purposefully designed to develop L2 speaking. Concerning this, Bygate proposes some basic principles for teaching L2 speaking and suggests that tasks should be carefully constructed to promote successful learners' development of L2 speaking. Effective tasks may show some sort of structure and elicit meaningful outcomes, and serve as a bridge between initial or group work and plenary teacher-talk, which may result in collaborative talk between learners and teachers. In addition, it should be noted that although the teaching of L2 speaking has evolved over the years, much work remains to be done in this area, for example, with traditional language materials (e.g., textbooks).

Fernandez, in chapter eight,

covers a cutting-edge topic in the area of L2 teaching and research. Particularly, her study centres on bilingual speakers and addresses a quite common practice among bilingual speakers, that is, code-switching. The study presented here is conducted in a higher education context in the US and involves Spanish heritage language learners in the US whose dominant language is not their home language (i.e., Spanish), but English. The study investigates the different functions of English (as a language for code-switching) in the Spanish heritage language classroom. More specifically, the aim of the study is to explore metacognitive functions, metalinguistic functions and conversational functions during peer interaction. Participants speaking production were audio recorded, not only in situations involving learner-leaner interaction but also learner-teacher. Nonetheless, for the sake of this study, only peer interaction was considered. This study shows that heritage learners were able to employ only Spanish and adapt language to different situations and interlocutors; however, among peers, English was used, for example, as a marker of bilingual identity, when facing language difficulties or discussing Spanish grammar. What is seen in this study is that code-switching has a prominent role in the language classroom, especially among bilinguals, and language teachers should reflect on this reality in order to best suit learners' needs in multilingual contexts.

Chapter nine,

by Tarone and Meyers, discusses the pedagogical value of The Mirroring Project, which broadly speaking cen-

tres on helping L2 speakers to improve intelligibility (commonly neglected from L2 speaking courses). This study represents valuable academic contribution that addresses L2 speaking from a multimodal perspective in a higher education context with international students in the US, who must obtain a high level in L2 speaking to teach undergraduate students (International Teaching Assistant, ITA). To reach that end, ITAs may take a course that addresses L2 intelligibility. In so doing, ITAs can develop their mastery of L2 suprasegmental phonology and non-linguistic communication. This study reports on a case study of a Chinese graduate student who participated in the project. Data were collected three times during the 15-week semester, showing three different developmental moments. Data analysis involved an acoustic analysis using PRAAT to examine suprasegmental features and a perceptual analysis that focuses on non-linguistic resources, emotion and tone. Findings revealed improvement during the instructional treatment in terms of intonation, stress, and non-linguistic resources, which became more evident in her final performance, described as more intelligible and more engaging. The study shows the value of providing learners with specific training that addresses key aspects in communication from a multimodal perspective.

Final chapter

Alonso, the editor of the volume, offers a final chapter that serves as a sort of academic commentary on this cutting-edge field of research. The author provides a critical review of the role of L2 speaking and comments on current approaches to teaching L2 speaking, revisits and comments on the main contributions of the different chapters included in the volume, and offers a precise overview of future research directions based on the salient research outcomes of the volume. The section devoted to the role of L2 speaking across various teaching methods serves the reader to explore how this particular language skill has been treated across different teaching methods, including, among others, the Grammar Translation Method or the Direct Method, and of course, current approaches such as the Communicative Approach and the Task-based Approach, which are learner-centred and understand L2 speaking as a key element. This review is followed by current approaches to L2 speaking, such as Task-based Language Teaching, Content Integrated Language Learning. The author highlights that current perspectives view language as a social activity in which the social and cognitive construct are integrated. Finally, the author reflects on future research directions that definitely will be valuable for researchers in the area of L2 speaking.

Overall, the volume reviewed here represents an impressive academic contribution in terms of the vast array of topics and issues that it addresses. As acknowledged in this review, this compilation of chapters covers a wide range of academic concerns as regards L2 speaking and

offers academic, critical and pedagogical reflection from various perspectives. Together, they provide a glimpse into promising directions of future research and language teaching in the area of L2 speaking.

The relevance of sociolinguistic competence as part of L2 speaking is highlighted in chapter one, while the development of interactional competence is discussed in chapter two. In both chapters, the authors provide a theoretical background that support their scope and offer various examples that clearly evidence the importance of developing these competences in the L2 classroom. These two competences are also in line with pragmatic competence, which, unfortunately, is not directly addressed in this volume. The role of gestures in L2 speaking are acknowledged in chapter three, in which the author reviews various types of gestures and the role of gestures in L2 speaking. The author presents various examples to illustrate that L2 speaking is not static but an action. In chapter four the authors show the potential of following a conversation analysis perspective to explore how L2 speaking is constructed in interaction. Through a series of examples, the authors discuss L2 speaking as an embodied and socially distributed social accomplishment.

In chapter five, using CDTS, the authors show learners' variability by exploring the performance of two twins over a period of time. Findings support the need for revisiting language teaching practices in order to provide learners with further opportunities to develop L2 skills. A corpus-driven analysis of L2 talk (non-native speakers and native speakers) is presented in chapter six. This study provides insights into the methodological approach followed in the study as well as into the development of L2 speaking, which definitely will be beneficial for language teachers. The role of task in L2 speaking is revisited in chapter seven in which the author claims for creating pedagogical spaces for L2 speaking. The author suggests designing specific tasks that engage learners in group work and whole class talk, and enhance meaningful L2 speaking outcomes. In chapter eight, the author focuses on the Spanish heritage classroom with bilingual speakers (Spanish and English) to explore English code-switching in peer interaction. Findings are not only revealing as regards different code-switching functions but also as regards the pedagogical value of code-switching. Chapter nine offers a case study of a learner's development of L2 speaking that focuses particularly on intelligibility and bodily actions. Chapter ten, as indicated above, serves as an academic commentary on the current situation of L2 speaking in which the author not only provides a review of L2 speaking but also reflects on speaking as a social and cognitive construct. Finally, the author, drawing on the key academic outcomes of the different contributors, identifies future research directions.

Certainly, the volume provides an up-dated academic contribution that discusses various and innovative ways to approach L2 speaking from different pedagogical and

research perspectives, and tries to meet current trends in language research and teaching such as multimodality and multilingualism. The different contributions of the volume constitute an academic effort that demonstrates the value of specific pedagogical applications, contributes to disseminating academic research, and detects promising areas of research. Broadly speaking, in this volume, L2 speaking is seen as dynamic and socially-based, assuming that language and speaking involves the use of a variety of communicative modes in multilingual contexts. Taken as a whole, the volume presents a balanced overview of L2 speaking research and teaching. I remain hopeful that these academic chapters can contribute to narrowing the existing gap between language teachers and research in the area of L2 speaking. Finally, I also believe that this volume will be instrumental for researchers in the area of L2 speaking, language teachers as well as graduate and postgraduate students interested in this particular field.

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