

Book review

***New directions in language learning and psychology*, edited by Christina Gkonou, Dietmar Tatzl, and Sarah Mercer (2016).**
Springer, 259 pages. Hardcover €103.99, ISBN: 978-3-319-23490-8.
eBook €83.29, 978-3-319-23491-5.

Nurhayani
State Islamic University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Nani Solihati
University of Muhammadiyah Prof DR HAMKA, Indonesia

(Text received 21 July 2017; accepted 27 July 2018; final version 29 September 2018)
DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.711>

A body of literature in psychology and language learning has drawn an interconnection between these two different fields (see for example Mercer, Ryan, & Williams, 2012; Williams, Mercer, & Ryan, 2016). Many ranges of constructs in psychology such as motivation, anxiety, emotion, beliefs, and strategies are widely investigated in the field of language teaching and learning. For example, a recent research article by Varasteh, Ghanizadeh, & Akbari, (2016) examines interrelationships among several constructs such as cognitive, motivation and metacognition to envisage learners' test anxiety, strategy in learning a language and their language learning achievement.

This edited volume by Christina Gkonou, Dietmar Tatzl, and Sarah Mercer is a collection of papers aiming to develop possible new directions for language learning psychology by evaluating conceptual frameworks, methods, and implications of recent research findings in the field. More specifically, the volume attempts to understand individual learners' psychology and some contributing factors within the context of language learning classrooms. To this end, a number of qualitative methods such as narratives, discourse analysis, qualitative interviews and grounded theory, autobiographies, diaries and lesson observations, learner drawings and likert-scale questionnaires are comprehensively discussed (p. 2). The methodological variety presented in the volume will benefit researchers in developing the appropriate design in their future research, and possibly for language educators in their teaching practices.

The volume comprises fourteen chapters, with chapter one as an introduction and chapter fourteen as a conclusion. As mentioned by the editors (p. 2), these chapters are developed around several themes, such as learners' strategy in language learning, learner autonomy, the role of motivation, learners' learning beliefs, teacher identity, and other topics including attributions, intentionality, emotion and mentoring.

In chapter one, the introduction, the editors first clarify what is meant by language learning psychology. Citing Mercer, Ryan and Williams (2012, p. 2), language learning psychology is perceived as "mental experiences, process, thoughts, feelings, motives, and behaviours individuals involved in language learning" (cited in Gkonou, Tatzl, & Mercer, 2016, p. 1). An outline of the chapters in the volume is also presented in the introduction to pre-empt for the readers the contents in the volume.

In chapter two, the authors, Achilleas Kostoulas and Juup Stelma, attempt to build a conceptual model for language learning psychology by exploring intentionality and complex systems theory (CST). The authors begin the chapter by providing a comprehensive overview of the notions of complexity, complex system, and a complex system of intentions and their role in language learning. In the chapter, the authors present language learning as 'a network of complex system' comprising of three main systems (e.g. the linguistic system, the intentional system and the pedagogical system) at three different levels – namely individuals, small groups and societies. The authors' two sources of supporting evidence (from Norway and Greece L2 classrooms) for their proposed model are exceptional, and contribute to making the volume worth reading. At the end of the chapter, the authors suggest a complex system of intention as a framework for research in language learning.

Chapter three is authored by Carol Griffiths and Gôrsev Inceçay. In the chapter, the authors present a number of issues related to language learning strategy, including the definition of strategy, the classification of strategy, a theoretical framework for strategies in language learning, and interconnecting variables affecting learners' use of strategy.

Chapter four, by Dietmara Tatzl, examines learner autonomy from the perspective of complex dynamic system (CDS) theory. Within this perspective, learner autonomy is promoted through interrelation and interaction among two main variables, including diversity of learners and context, as well as the character of autonomy itself.

In chapter five, the author, Denyze Toffoli, discusses students' language learning autonomy within the view of attachment theory. Denyze argues that autonomy and attachment in many ways are interconnected. By presenting the case of Pauline's language

learning, the author suggests three types of relationship which, within the view of attachment theory, may affect learners' autonomy.

Discussions in chapter six and seven focus on the role of affect in language teaching and learning classrooms. Interestingly, the two chapters are interrelated. In chapter six, Maria Giovanna Tassinari reports on her research investigating the role of the affective dimension in contributing to successful autonomous language learning. In particular, Tassinari suggests that learners' affective dimension is critical in influencing their autonomous behaviour in classroom learning.

In chapter seven, Jim King explains the role of emotion from the perspective of the teachers in a higher education setting. King's findings suggest some contextual factors contributing to teachers' emotions and shaping their personal well-being.

Rebecca L. Oxford and Diana Bolanos Sanchez's writing in chapter eight highlights the extent to which dimensions of emotion, motivation, engagement, perseverance and mentoring contribute to learners' EFL learning.

Chapter nine, by Dorota Werbinska, reports on a study of language teacher professional identity. The findings of the study suggest two important aspects that promote diverse patterns of teachers' professional identity, including teachers' teaching motivation and the discontinuity of their experiences.

The use of drawing to identify learners' belief about learning English is explored in chapter ten, by Sake Suzuki and Marshal R. Childs.

The construction of learners' motivation from the view of identity and the social and economic environment is discussed in chapter eleven by Virag Csillagh.

In chapter twelve, Ana Sofia Gonzalez's writing focuses on three dimensions of learners' attribution of success and failure in foreign language learning, including locus of causality (success and failure is determined by internal and external causes), stability (success and failure depends on changeable or unchangeable attribution), and controlability (success or failure is determined by others and is under their control).

Chapter thirteen, authored by Margit Reitbauer and Hannes Fromm, reviews the construct and theories of online learning practices, which are claimed widely as an effective teaching and learning methods. The chapter emphasises the need to redefine teachers' roles and the requirements for teachers' web-based teaching and learning skills. Moreover, aspects of students' learning need to reconceptualised. The chapter suggests a transformative interface between the pedagogical model, instructional strategies and learning technologies within an online language learning framework.

The last chapter, fourteen, summarises the discussion of all chapters around several themes that inspire future directions in language learning psychology, including new constructs, new theoretical frameworks, new methodological frameworks, new populations and new contexts. More importantly, the editors also highlight directions for future research in the growing field of language learning psychology. These new directions in the field of language learning psychology make the book a good reference for both researchers and teachers.

Overall, this volume brings together insights from four interrelated fields, including social and educational psychology, language teaching and learning, and second language acquisition (SLA). While the volume benefits researchers by including directions for future research, the volume also informs teachers about the role of psychology in English language teaching and learning classrooms –specifically several psychological constructs which constitute the main themes of the volume. With this knowledge, teachers can better understand their students and develop classroom teaching and learning activities based upon their psychological condition. Thus, the volume is also a worthwhile read and highly recommended for language teachers.

References

- Mercer, S., Ryan, S., & Williams, M. (2012). *Psychology for language learning: Insights from research, theory and practice*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Varasteh, H., Ghanizadeh, A., & Akbari, O. (2016). The role of task value, effort-regulation, and ambiguity tolerance in predicting EFL learners' test anxiety, learning strategies, and language achievement. *Psychological Studies*, 61(1), 2–12. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12646-015-0351-5>
- Williams, M., Mercer, S., & Ryan, S. (2016). *Exploring psychology in language learning and teaching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Author information

Nurhayani is a member of teaching staff at Faculty of Psychology and Teaching, State Islamic University of Sumatera Utara, Indonesia. She obtained her M.A. in educational psychology with a research project address issue in moral reasoning of gifted students from parenting perspectives. Her research interests include learning motivation, emotions and moral reasoning.

Email: nurhayani@uinsu.ac.id

Nani Solihati is an associate professor at Faculty of Teacher Training and Pedagogy, University of Muhammadiyah Prof. DR. HAMKA (UHAMKA), Jakarta, Indonesia. She obtained her Ph.D. in language education in 2007 with her doctoral research examining the influence of collaborative learning on students' writing ability. Her research interests include neurolinguistics, discourse analysis, language and literature. **Email:** nanti_solihati@uhamka.ac.id

To cite this article:

Nurhayani, & Solihati, N. (2018). New directions in language learning and psychology, edited by Christina Gkonou, Dietmar Tatzl, and Sarah Mercer. *Bellaterra Journal of Teaching & Learning Language & Literature*, 11(3), 104-108. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5565/rev/jtl3.711>

