BOOK NOTICES

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This volume is the third in the Trends in language acquisition research series by the International Association for the Study of Child Language. It focuses on first language (L1) development in school-age children and adolescents, including both normal and impaired learners. The introductory chapter by Nippold lays out broad questions of later language development—namely (a) what develops (figurative language, low frequency syntactic structures, metalinguistic awareness, etc.) and (b) what drives development (education and literacy, new cognitive abilities, etc.). The 10 chapters that follow describe work in a variety of languages: English, French, Hebrew, Spanish, and Swedish.

Despite dealing exclusively with L1 development, the volume contains some information of potential interest to SLA specialists. Pacton and Fayol discuss children’s acquisition of spelling conventions in French and the relation of spelling to implicit and explicit language learning. Peskin and Olson discuss comprehension of poetry among high school and college students, exploring how the ability to understand what is said versus what is meant differs between novice and expert language users. Blum-Kulka reviews research on peer-talk as a basis for developing discursive literacy and examines school-age children’s ability to represent differing speaker perspectives.

Tolchinsky’s concluding chapter is perhaps the most relevant to research on SLA because it reviews cognitive changes, such as theory-of-mind development, that presumably support all types of language learning. Tolchinsky also discusses features of later language development in a way that is abstract yet precise enough to allow cross-linguistic comparisons. For instance, she notes that

... in languages that use indefinite markers for new information—the girl for a known girl, a girl for an unknown one—children begin to use this device to mark newness only at around age seven. In languages like Chinese, that mark newness by position and where this information is located post-verbally, this device appears even later, around age ten. (p. 237)

Thus, although the volume does not address issues of SLA specifically, it does provide a relatively rare discussion of language development in general during the years when a second language is likely to be acquired.

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