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Loewen, S., & Reinders, H. (2011). *Key concepts in Second Language Acquisition*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN 0230230180, 256 pages, \$23 US.

Key concepts in Second Language Acquisition is a user-friendly terminology guide which, according to the back cover, is the ideal quick reference text for students of linguistics and language teachers alike, and for researchers as well according to the authors themselves. The book is written by Shawn Loewen, an Associate Professor in the Second Language Studies program at Michigan State University, and Hayo Reinders, Head of Learner Development at Middlesex University. The book consists of a four-page introduction, a glossary holding 453 alphabetically-ordered entries accompanied with illustrations (i.e. tables & figures), cross-referencing of related entries when needed, and key references for each entry. The book finishes with an index of key references.

What does it mean to acquire a second language? How is a second language defined in a multilingual context? *Key concepts in Second Language Acquisition* raises these critical questions in an effort to *consider* them (not to answer them) throughout the book by providing concise definitions of key terms and concepts in the field of second language acquisition (SLA). In the introduction section of the book, in an effort to define SLA, the authors break down the term into its parameters (i.e. second, language, acquisition). The above critical questions are raised when the authors define the last two parameters (i.e. language, acquisition).

I believe the authors have been only partly successful in reaching the purpose of considering the above key questions in SLA. For instance, when defining the term *language*, the authors refer to different fields of study such as linguistics, pragmatics, and discourse, and to how each field views language use differently. While discussing these different views, relevant key terms and concepts are mentioned, all of which the reader expects to be included as separate entries in the glossary. However, a number of them such as *lexis*, *pronunciation*, *dialects*, *language variation*, and *mutual intelligibility* are missing, even though they are stated in the introduction section of the book. One might argue that although the term *pronunciation* is not defined, *phonology* is; or although the term *lexis* is not defined, *lexicon* is. Even if the terms are tapping roughly the same concepts, not including them as separate entries in the glossary shows inconsistency in the authors' selection, since other terms tapping roughly the same concepts such as *vocabulary* and *lexicon* are included as separated entries in the glossary (see p. xii). In other cases, key terms that are raised as points of concern in SLA such as *standard vs. non-standard language*, *learning vs. acquisition*, and *development vs. acquisition* are defined and relevant issues are explained in the glossary. Therefore, the authors have accomplished the stated objective of the book in these cases.

As for the glossary itself, the power of this book lies, partly, in its scope. In contrast with *A Glossary of Applied Linguistics* by Davies (2005) which is criticised for its lack of clear and predetermined criteria for its selection of terms and concepts (Contesse, 2007), the criteria for selecting terms and concepts in Loewen and Reinders' glossary is limited to defining those which are a) unique to SLA, and b) from other disciplines such as linguistics or education but influential in SLA (e.g. Universal Grammar, Sociocultural

Theory). Those terms and concepts that are primarily linguistic and/or sociolinguistic in nature and those only related to teaching methodology, such as grammar explanations, are not included. Such a narrow scope not only increases the specificity of the content but also that of the audience; those interested in areas of applied linguistics which are for instance ‘purely’ linguistic or sociolinguistic in nature might find it far less inclusive as opposed to those interested in SLA and L2 learning.

Another strength of the book is its inclusion of list of key references to published works, not at the end of the book as bibliography, but proceeding right after each entry. This indicates that the authors understand the limitation of the book which aims to provide “only an introduction to the most important concepts in the field” (p. xiii), and therefore the need to refer the reader to other prominent sources on the topic. Keeping references close to each entry does not only make key influential sources, which are relevant to each concept, easily accessible, but also gives the reader exposure to authors and articles that have significantly shaped each of the key terms and concepts.

In conclusion, for Loewen and Reinders, the need for a key concept book about SLA arises due to the existence of three realities: 1) formalisation of SLA as an academic discipline, 2) growth of second language industry, hence its economic reality, 3) concern for the questions of what it means to acquire a second language, and how a second language is defined in a multilingual context. Although, at times the latter is not fully accomplished, I believe, Loewen and Reinders have been successful in providing an up-to-date, clear, objective and in-depth yet concise source of definitions of key terminologies in SLA. *Key concepts in Second Language Acquisition* proves to be a reliable quick-reference text for students, teachers and researchers in the field.

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Biographical Statement

Nazanin Ghodrati is a PhD candidate and tutor in ESL and CALL subjects at the University of Melbourne, School of Languages and Linguistics. Her PhD research is on the development of collaborative critical thinking in multicultural blended learning contexts with specific focus on ESL students. Her research interests are blended language learning, computer-supported collaborative learning and critical thinking. She has recently published a paper in *Australian Society for Computers in Learning in Tertiary Education (Ascilite)* 2011 conference: *Changing Demands, Changing Directions*.

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