



***Second Language Acquisition in Action:  
 Principles from Practice (2018)***

Andrea Nava & Luciana Pedrazzini

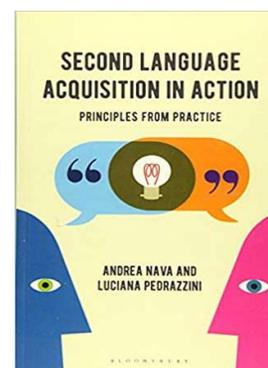
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It is now well established that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is an expanding field replete with theoretical and practical issues considered significant in the lives and education of today's teachers and students. *Second Language Acquisition in Action: Principles from Practice* is one such book that seeks to raise second language teachers' awareness of critical findings of research. The book's central idea has originated from an attempt to answer the following questions: What does SLA research have to offer teachers? How can teachers become aware of the possible relevance of SLA findings to their teaching? How can teachers be challenged to think differently and experiment with new options in their teaching?

Andrea Nava and Luciana Pedrazzini, the book's authors, provide a comprehensive view of teaching and learning in the field of SLA. The 225-pages book includes tables, graphs, and many hands-on activities. A website available at <https://www.bloomsbury.com/cw/second-language-acquisition-in-action/> accompanies the book. Seven videos (7-18 minutes in length) addressing *Second Language Acquisition in Action* are easily found there. The book is comprised of six chapters, each chapter addressing one or two general SLA tenets. In each chapter, the sections are as follows:

1. **Key questions** are posed to draw the readers' attention to the main issues related to the SLA principle explored in the chapter.
2. **Experience** involves readers in 'reflection' tasks to tap their previous knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes about specific issues of language learning and teaching related to an SLA principle.
3. **The principle** introduces and explores the SLA principle the chapter targets through various resources (e.g., short questions, diagrams, tables) to analyze the primary theoretical constructs and concepts underpinning the tenets therein.
4. **The principle in the classroom** further explores practice along with lessons that showcase EFL teachers native and non-native teaching at different levels of schooling. Lesson activities are introduced through a short video first and are then analyzed through transcripts that support the various teaching materials. As noted above, all videos are also provided on the website that accompanies the book.

5. **Restructuring and planning** engages readers in several tasks that encourage them to reflect on the application of key methodological principles in language teaching, including task planning, materials evaluation, and design.
6. **Future reading** comprises the end of a chapter and includes selected references related to the SLA principle introduced in section three of each chapter.

Herewith a brief discussion the book's six chapters. Chapter 1, *Form, meaning, and use*, addresses the following three questions: Is lexicogrammar only about *form*? Can lexicogrammar be learned through a single learning process? Should lexicogrammar be taught through written and/or spoken drills? The chapter explores how lexicogrammar may be viewed as a more complex phenomenon than the language teaching tradition has often assumed.

Chapter 2, *Comprehensible input*, addresses the following four questions: What kind of input information are language learners exposed to? Why do learners need access to input that is comprehensible? How can input be made intelligible? How does comprehensible input support second language learning? The chapter aims to analyze the role of input in SLA. In so doing, it both explores the principle derived from Krashen's *input hypothesis* (1985) and investigates the complex interplay between input and other cognitive, interactional, and sociocultural factors.

Chapter 3, *Input processing*, addresses the following four questions: What aspects of the language do learners spontaneously focus on when trying to understand a message? What language features do they not attend to? What strategies and mechanisms do learners use in processing new data in the input? How can teachers help learners optimize their processing strategies and make an appropriate form-meaning connection? The chapter describes how learners make sense of the language they hear or read and how they connect (or do *not* connect) particular forms of a language with corresponding meanings. The authors used VanPatten's (1996, 2004, 2015) IP (*Input Processing*) model to explain how learners process language input.

Chapter 4, *Implicit and explicit knowledge*, addresses the following three questions: What does it mean to have implicit knowledge vs. explicit knowledge of a second language? To what extent does explicit knowledge foster SLA? To what extent can explicit knowledge of a second language be learned, and how is it best taught in the classroom? The chapter sheds light on implicit and explicit language knowledge concepts and explores how explicit knowledge can play an essential role in classroom-based language learning and teaching.

Chapter 5, *Interaction and corrective feedback*, address the following four questions: What types of interactional adjustments can facilitate comprehension and foster language learning? How can 'scaffolding' take place during verbal interaction to mediate language learning? What can teachers do to help learners notice problematic aspects of their production during the interaction? How can collaborative dialogue between teachers and students be enhanced to support language learning? The chapter aims to illustrate the process that is involved when learners encounter input, receive feedback, or produce output, and how these processes can foster language acquisition.

Chapter 6, *Output production*, addresses the following four questions: How does output production support the process of learning another language? What can teachers do to help learners develop their language knowledge through output production? How does fluency impact output production? What can teachers do to help learners become more automatic and fluent in their input production? This chapter explores Swain's (1985) *output hypothesis* and shows how it has led to a reappraisal of the role of output production in SLA. The authors also shed light on 'tasks' as language learning and teaching tools for eliciting learners' 'pushed output,' as well as techniques and tasks for fostering fluency.

The content of each chapter aside, it is worth noting here that the SLA principles the book introduces in easy-to-understand language have been thoroughly examined and presented by the authors to make it easy for readers to understand how these principles can help them understand language teaching and learning. Indeed, the specific activities and strategies the authors introduce will no doubt help curriculum writers develop strong language programs and syllabi that address students' needs and interests, thereby altering the classroom teaching experience for the better.

Equally important to point out here is the observation that this book not only poses substantial issues of teaching and learning, more importantly, perhaps, it offers specific answers readers can reflect upon and connect to their own teaching and learning experience. The book also provides key 'implications for teaching' that generally follow the theoretical explanations along with the research findings supporting them. The book's subtitle alone underscores this approach: *Principles from Practice*. Certainly, the very structure of the book, aided by the many tables and graphs present in each chapter, epitomizes the ease by which readers are able to follow the line of argumentation the book pursues across all six chapters. Moreover, the videos included help demonstrate the key ideas each chapter is pursuing. Having samples of teachers teaching in their own classrooms is a viable feature not easily found in many books on the same subject. However, here we suggest that perhaps the authors may want to reconsider in the future the placement of the videos to come right before the introduction of each chapter, thereby making the link to the chapter's content all the more accessible. In addition, the reflective tasks each chapter included were efficient in solidifying more broadly the reader's understanding of the critical issues the book raised.

In closing, we can state with confidence that *Second Language Acquisition in Action: Principles from Practice* is an important resource in language teaching education. Not only does it provide teachers and researchers alike with valuable tasks and activities to overcome many of the challenges the field of SLA is presently experiencing, more importantly, the book underscores the vital connection between SLA research findings and classroom teaching and learning practices that range from *form, meaning, and use* (Chapter 1) to *Output production* (Chapter 6). Challenging teachers to think differently and experiment with new options in their teaching is a feature that should be celebrated, no questions asked. With a wide range of information and references spearheading future research, we can easily recommend this book for use in foundational MA courses, for TESOL/EFL trainees, and, equally so, for in-service teachers, who thirst for a better analysis of diverse SLA theories and practices. In short, *Second Language Acquisition in Action* is an easy-to-follow book that should see its 225-pages opened again and again, not least because it undergirds its SLA principles from the very practice language teachers engage in daily.

## References

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