

Byrnes, H. (Ed.). (2006). *Advanced language learning: The contribution of Halliday and Vygotsky*. London/New York: Continuum. vi + 268 pages.

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Mastery of advanced levels of language abilities is essential for the academic and professional success of many second-language (L2) learners. However, this issue has only recently begun to attract attention among researchers in the field of language education. This edited volume by Heidi Byrnes examines advanced L2 teaching and learning. To this end, the book has combined insights from two prominent theoretical perspectives: Halliday systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and the Vygotskian socio-cultural theory of mind (SCT). Such a synthesis of perspectives has provided a useful framework for exploring the many complexities involved in teaching high levels of L2 skills in educational settings.

The book consists of three parts, containing 12 chapters plus an introduction by the editor. The introduction discusses some of the key assumptions of SFL and SCT and their insights for advanced L2 teaching and learning. The first part, titled "Theoretical Considerations in Advanced Instructed Learning," contains three chapters, each exploring fundamental concepts in SFL or SCT theories. Chapter one by Matthiessen offers an extensive discussion of some of the key precepts of Halliday's systemic functional grammar, including the notions of language as a meaning-making resource and language learning as a multidimensional and multifunctional process. Chapter 2 by Wertsch conceptualizes a framework that views language not simply as a system of rules, but what he calls a *dynamic form of dialogic energy*. Making a distinction between *local dialogue* (that concerns face-to-face communication) and *generalized collective dialogue* (that involves voices of others), Wertsch argues that advanced language ability means a mastery of both local and generalized collective dialogues. Chapter 3 by Lantolf considers language proficiency from the perspective of Agar's theory of *languaculture*, an idea that emphasizes unification rather than separation of language and culture. Lantolf discusses how such a perspective can help understand the intricacies of advanced language proficiency.

Part two, titled "Description and Pedagogy," contains seven chapters. Chapter 4, by Swain, addresses the role of collaboration and agency in language learning and its relationship with *linguaging*, a concept that involves using language to understand and create meaning. The author provides examples from L2 studies to show how languaging and collaboration mediate L2 development. Chapter 5 by Teruya explores the role of grammar in learning Japanese as an L2. Conceiving of grammar as a resource for thinking, knowing, and understanding, the author explores how learners of Japanese learn to think grammatically in the process of learning the language. In Chapter 6, Schleppegrell explores the contributions of a systemic functional perspective to acquiring advanced skills in expository writing by learners of English. The author examines how such a perspective aids identification of linguistic features that are fundamental to constructing advanced academic texts. In Chapter 7, Colombi explores the development of

academic writing among college learners of Spanish. Using the notion of grammatical metaphor (GM) as explicated in SFL, the author describes how Spanish employs various forms of GM (ideational, logical, and interpersonal) as a resource for creating meaning in academic texts. Chapter 8, by Ryshina-Pankova, focuses on the issues of coherence and cohesion in foreign language writing. Using ideas from genre theory, the author examines how such a perspective can be used to understand cohesion and coherence in organizing meaning in advanced L2 German texts. In Chapter 9, Strauss, Feiz, Xiang, and Ivanova propose what they call a *dialogically discursive and literacy-centered approach* to L2 writing. Based on Bakhtin's concept of dialogicality, the authors examine the implications of this approach for designing an ESL Freshman composition course in a university context. Chapter 10 by Caffarel considers the contributions of SFL as an instructional framework. Through describing the application of SFL in a French course in a linguistics department, the author shows how the use of such a framework can help learners develop advanced levels of understanding and abilities in a new language.

Part three, "Programmatic and Curricular Issues," contains two chapters that examine the role of constructs such as genre, register and corpus in the development of curriculum and instructional programs. In Chapter 11, Crane focuses on the notion of genre, and shows how the use of genre-based approaches to teaching can provide a useful tool for designing and sequencing curricular materials. In Chapter 12, Moore considers the role of register and corpus analysis. With a focus on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), the author explores how register and corpus-based studies of academic texts can contribute to designing EAP curriculums that can promote advanced L2 language proficiency.

One of the outstanding features of this book is that it offers an in-depth exploration of an issue that has not received much attention in traditional approaches to language education; that is, the issue of advanced L2 instruction, and from the perspective of theories whose contributions have been relatively unexamined in the field (i.e., systemic function linguistics and the socio-cultural theories). Through examples from research and pedagogy, the book demonstrates the usefulness of these frameworks for exploring many issues associated with advanced L2 learning, including theoretical as well as practical and curricular issues. The chapters are well selected and are written in a clear and accessible language with an engaging style of writing throughout. One small shortcoming though is that despite the dual perspective in the book, most of the chapters are based on studies using systemic functional linguistics (as also noted by the editor), not the Vygotskian socio-cultural theory. Although the two perspectives overlap on many domains, they also provide distinct insights that could have been explored in some of the chapters. Another comment is that since the volume deals with a range of concepts and topics, a brief introduction to each part previewing the major theme of each section and a final conclusion that reflects on and ties together the different ideas would have been beneficial.

All in all, the book has made a significant contribution to the field of language education. It offers not only a new perspective but also a useful source of critical thinking on many issues relevant to advanced L2 teaching and learning.