

Mackey, A. (2020). *Interaction, feedback and task research in second language learning: Methods and design*. Cambridge University Press.

Reviewer: Ali Shehadeh, United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates

This book by Alison Mackey focuses on three key and essential constructs in the study and research of second/foreign language (L2) learning and teaching. These are Interaction, Feedback, and Task (IFT) studies. This is the first volume and serious attempt to bring these three central constructs in L2 learning and teaching together, explain them, and show how they relate to each other and how they relate to L2 research and study. The book addresses all key topics and developments related to these three areas in an approachable manner from their early inception in the 1970s and 80s till the present time including the use of state-of-the-art technology like eye-tracking, imaging, and fMRI in research into IFT and L2 learning. Using examples from published IFT studies in leading journals, volumes, or dissertations, the book presents clear and practical advice on how to carry out research in these areas, providing step-by-step guides to design and methodological principles.

The book consists of a preface, ten chapters, a glossary, a list of references and an index. The preface introduces the book, its goal, significance, and contribution to the body of literature on interaction, feedback and task (IFT) studies. The author states, "Overall, my hope is that this book will support and inspire more research into the three closely related areas of interaction, feedback, and tasks, and how they combine to promote second language learning" (p. xv).

Chapter 1, Theory and approaches in research into IFT in L2 learning, introduces the theoretical and empirical foundations of research into IFT and how these three constructs are related to each other and to the wider field of L2 learning and teaching. The chapter discusses open questions and various research problems of relevance to IFT studies. Chapter 2, Designing studies of the roles of IFT in L2 learning, describes the different kinds of research designs and approaches that are available on IFT studies and how these are considered to promote L2 learning. The chapter provides a starting point for people interested in carrying out studies on these topics, or who want to appraise, critique, or better understand research methods used in IFT studies. Chapter 3, Investigating individual differences in IFT studies on aptitude, working memory, and cognitive creativity in L2 learning, describes the measures used in investigating individual differences in IFT studies like working memory and aptitude scores. The chapter also includes a thorough discussion of a relatively under-studied area, cognitive creativity in second language acquisition (SLA), and how this informs research into IFT studies. Chapter 4, Collecting introspective data in IFT research, discusses introspective research methods and how they enhance our understanding of the cognitive and social processes that underlie interaction-driven learning. In the author's words, the chapter describes "a range of commonly used tools for obtaining introspections, including stimulated recalls, think-alouds, interviews, discourse completion tasks, and self-reports on social media, all in the context of research on interaction, feedback, and tasks" (p. 71). Chapter 5, Creating and using surveys, interviews, and mixed methods for research into IFT and L2 learning, focuses on survey-based research like interviews. The chapter discusses issues like designing questionnaires, question types, and how we develop and administer surveys. The chapter also explains the

advantages of mixed-methods approaches in IFT research. Chapter, 6, Doing meta-analytic and synthetic research on IFT and L2 learning, describes existing synthetic and meta-analytic work as well as replication studies in IFT research. Importantly, the chapter discusses “how meta-analysis and replication research can help in answering essential questions with respect to interaction, feedback, and task research” (p. 106). The author provides a hands-on guide on how to do meta-analytic and synthetic research and replication work in IFT research. Chapter 7, Investigating IFT and L2 learning in instructional settings, focuses on IFT research, reviewing the literature on the various types of L2 learners in instructional settings, including adult, young and immigrant learners. The chapter discusses the considerations that need to be born in mind for classroom research into IFT, including both the challenges and rewards of carrying out research with young learners in classrooms. Chapter 8, Choosing and using eye-tracking, imaging, and prompted production measures to investigate IFT in L2 learning, focuses on the new directions in IFT research like eye-tracking paradigms, imaging techniques, EEGs, MEGs, and fMRIs, as well as priming techniques as used in psycholinguistic research on interaction. The chapter discusses how these new directions in IFT research are adding to our understanding of L2 learning. Chapter 9, Working with data in IFT research, discusses coding and analysis issues in quantitative and qualitative/interpretivist research on IFT studies. The chapter concludes with a suggestion to target populations that are more diverse than the traditional “Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic (WEIRD)” ones (p. 189). Finally, chapter 10, Common problems, pitfalls, and how to address them in research on IFT in L2 learning, covers common pitfalls in IFT research and work like skipping the pilot testing, language barriers, logistical surprises, and wrong method/wrong use of method, and how to avoid them. The chapter describes authentic cases that happened to the author herself, her colleagues, and research collaborations with which she was involved. The book concludes with an A-Z glossary for easy reference. The glossary is quite helpful to the reader because it contains explanations of the key terms, concepts, and constructs used in the book.

To aid the reader, the book contains numerous boxed inset “Read It!” studies throughout the text to illustrate the main points, “Keep It in Mind!” bullets to summarize the gist, and “Try It!” suggestions to provide opportunities for hands-on practice. I found these extremely useful and helpful for anyone interested in conducting research into the three areas of focus of the book. The book’s informative approach to study design and in-depth discussions of implementing research methodology makes it accessible to novice and experienced researchers alike.

Authored by one of the most well-established authorities in the applied linguistics and L2 learning and teaching fields, the book is written in an engaging, lively, and easy-to-follow style, which makes it a real pleasure to read. I have no doubt that this book will be one of the classic resources and reference books for researchers, research students, and language professionals conducting research on interaction, feedback, and task studies in L2 learning and teaching worldwide.