第二语言发展：不断扩展
Second Language Development: Ever Expanding

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世界知名 TESOL 专家论丛

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出 版 说 明

"世界知名 TESOL 专家论丛"由上海外语教育出版社约请国际知名英语教育和学术机构——世界英语教师协会（TESOL International Association）的前任主席孙以琳（Yilin Sun）教授担任主编，针对国内教师教育发展的需求，精心策划推出。丛书主编及作者均来自 TESOL 协会，在国际英语教学研究领域颇有建树。这是 TESOL 协会专家首次集中与我国外语界合作，联袂将国际教师教育与发展领域的研究精华向广大读者呈现。

丛书每种致力于教师教育发展的一个研究专题，集萃了作者在该领域的研究成果，既有丰富的理论知识，又有鲜活的课堂实例，从国际范围的广阔视野对英语教师的教学、科研和职业发展等领域的热点话题进行了探讨，展现了该研究领域的发展历程和研究成果。

丛书注重理论联系实际，具有很强的实用性和指导性，可供高校外语教师自学阅读，也可作为教师培训机构的辅助教材或参考读物。相信本套丛书的出版将从教学、科研、职业发展等角度为国内高校外语教师的教育和发展提供切实有效的理论指导和实践借鉴。

Preface

This book, *Second Language Development: Ever Expanding*, written by Diane Larsen-Freeman, is part of the book series *Foreign Language Teacher Education and Development — Selected Works of Renowned TESOL Experts* published by Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.

As we have witnessed, the field of TESOL has transformed itself over the last 50 years, especially in the last two decades. It is diverse, complex, multifaceted and "glocal". The increasing demand for global English has resulted in an expanded landscape of ever-diversifying profiles of users, uses and contexts.

This series features a selection of the works of a number of leading researchers and educators in the TESOL field, aiming to exemplify the diversity and complexity of the English language teaching (ELT) field.

Each book in this series focuses on a specific area in the ELT field. Topics include critical approaches to English language teaching, second language acquisition research, second language writing research and practice, second language reading research and practice, World Englishes, teacher education, corpus based grammar/lexical studies, English for specific purposes (ESP), language assessment, bilingual/multicultural education and language policy, to name a few.

The purpose of each book is to bring together both earlier and recent articles to show the development of the author's work over his/her academic career. The articles have been selected to address both theoretical issues and practical implications in English language teaching for in-service and pre-service ELT professionals, as this series is intended to not only help foreign language teachers develop professionally, but also serve as textbooks or recommended reading in teacher training institutes in China and other parts of Asia.

Following the trajectory of each author's own research and teaching career (an entire lifetime in some cases), each book provides readers with a vivid snapshot of the development in the author's perspectives on the issues addressed, reflecting the changes in theory, research and practice that have occurred in the specific area of inquiry over a period

of time. It is our hope that this series will contribute to a more extensive knowledge base and constructive disciplinary growth for the ELT field.

This book by Diane Larsen-Freeman contains a representative collection of the author's major works in her splendid career of half a century as a pioneering and leading researcher and scholar who is devoted to the research and praxis of second language acquisition (SLA).

In this book, the author shares with the readers the story of her intellectual journey, which started as a young university graduate working as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer teaching English in a secondary school in Malaysia to children whose mother tongue was Hakka Chinese; the story includes how her initial EFL teaching experience inspired her to pursue graduate studies at the University of Michigan, and how the "cognitive revolution" in the 70's aroused her curiosity about L2 learners' interlanguage. She recalled how her research challenged the "established" ideology of grammar teaching and the understanding of development of SLA, and how other scholars' work on psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and critical awareness of language and power reinforced her belief that the SLA field needed a more dynamic, adaptive and non-linear view of language and language learning. She continues to tell the readers how many of the complex, unanswered questions that arose from numerous SLA research studies compelled her to continue breaking new grounds, in exploring and eventually advancing a new theory — Complexity Theory (CT). Ultimately, she talks about how she gained further insights into language development as a creative act and the importance of respecting the creativity of all language users, including language learners. The book ends with a chapter where she sums up her most current perspectives on CT and the impact of multilingual and translanguaging on second language development (SLD). Using Larsen-Freeman's words, "what I have perceived as an expanding scope of the field has created in me the desire for a more comprehensive, dynamic, multifarious, yet holistic, account of SLD" (p.452).

The 17 carefully selected articles, along with an introduction and a conclusion, arranged in a chronological order, clearly illustrate not only the evolution of the author's own perspectives on SLA, but also the ground-breaking, field-advancing contributions she has made to the field of Applied Linguistics, changing the lenses through which we understand

language and SLD. What is unique about this book is that each chapter ends with an engaging and thought-provoking commentary which provides a seamless connection between the critical issues discussed in the current chapter and those to be addressed in the next one. There is no better way indeed to depict the ever expanding evolution of the SLD!

Over the past 50 years, few scholars have contributed more to our understanding of the evolution of SLA than Diane Larsen-Freeman. Larsen-Freeman's five-plus decades of field-advancing research and publications have opened up a whole new way of investigating second language development. This book is indeed an inspirational manifesto to the field of SLD.

It is a true privilege to include this book in the *Foreign Language Teacher Education and Development — Selected Works of Renowned TESOL Experts* as part of its growing list of valuable teacher development resources for our readers.

Yilin Sun
Seattle
October 2017

Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction

I am grateful for this opportunity to reflect on my long intellectual journey as it is captured in this selection of 17 of my publications. I have had a very satisfying career for five-plus decades now. My career began in 1967 when, after graduating from a university, I became an English as a Foreign Language teacher in Sabah, Malaysia. I was a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, and as such, I was given a two-year assignment. Mine was to teach English in the Government Secondary School of Tawau, East Malaysia. Every morning, I taught English to children who were studying it as one of their school subjects. The children spoke Hakka Chinese as their home language.

In the afternoon, I taught English to a "bridge class". It was given this name because the students in this class were bridging from Chinese-medium instruction to English-medium instruction. It is worth noting that due to Malaysia's legacy as a former British colony, my students in Borneo were destined to take the Cambridge Overseas exams, for which I, along with other teachers, worked to prepare them. To this end, I also taught precis-writing to an upper-level advanced class.

I was given two textbooks to use with the younger students. We teachers called them the "red book" and the "green book", and they were part of the University of Michigan's Rainbow Series. The books were meant to support teaching dialogues through mimicry-memorization and conducting drills of various sorts. Teaching the "bridge class" involved giving much more attention to reading and writing. The upper-level class practiced writing precis, again and again, with the aim of earning a good mark on the Cambridge Overseas Examination.

I had an exceptional time in Malaysia, and I will be ever grateful that my intercultural experience there launched me on my international career. I returned home with another gift — the gift of many questions: Had all my efforts drilling my students paid off? What about their efforts? What had my students learned? How had they learned? Was there a way that I could teach a language that would be more harmonious with my students' natural language learning? Seeking answers to these questions prompted

me to enter graduate school. I chose to matriculate at the University of Michigan, not because the textbooks that I had taught from were published there, but because of its reputation in the area of applied linguistics. Its reputation was in part due to the fact that its English Language Institute was established by Charles Carpenter Fries as the first of its kind in my country. I entered a Master's program in linguistics, with a specialization in TESOL. I also had the opportunity to teach a different audience — this time adult students living in the community.

When I arrived in Ann Arbor, Michigan at the beginning of the 1970s, there was a great deal of political unrest in my country. Aside from what was happening in the outside world and on our campus, there was also turmoil within linguistics. Linguist Noam Chomsky had challenged the prevailing behaviorist view of language learning at the time — that language is acquired through conditioning: the association of a particular stimulus with a particular response through reinforcement. First, Chomsky pointed out that speakers of a language were able to create new utterances and to understand them. Therefore, they had to have the mental "competence" to generate and understand novel utterances. Such competence, Chomsky asserted, must consist of a set of rules, later termed a "universal grammar", which was said to capture the regularities underlying all languages spoken in the world. Second, he argued that because it appeared that children acquired their native language relatively quickly while being exposed to less-than-optimal input and without having their errors corrected, it must be that such a grammar was innate.

In short, it was the time of the "cognitive revolution", and I found it exhilarating. I was thrilled by the possibility of there being an innate or "built-in syllabus", which S. Pit Corder (1967) had speculated to exist. If this were so — I thought — if we could align our course syllabi to it and teach in a way that was consistent with the natural language acquisition process, I might be able to accomplish my goal of teaching more harmoniously with my students' learning. My enthusiasm blossomed with the findings of first language (L1) acquisition researcher Roger Brown (1973). Brown's research showed that there was a common acquisition order for 14 English grammatical morphemes across the three children he studied. Then, too, about this time, publications such as Nemser's approximative systems (1971) and Selinker's interlanguage (1972) emphasized that second language learners had their own system of language, one apart from the native language and the target language. No

longer was learning thought to be the result of mimicry and behavioral reinforcement; learners were said to be discovering for themselves the grammar of the language to which they were exposed. Errors were not perceived in a negative light; instead, errors were seen to be evidence of learners' testing hypotheses about the rules of the language they were learning.

Excited by this turn of events, I decided to devote my doctoral dissertation research to studying the interlanguage of second language (L2) learners of English. Specifically, I sought to determine if my research findings would replicate the acquisition order of grammatical morphemes that had been found for young ESL learners (Dulay & Burt, 1974) or whether the reported order was simply an artifact of the instrument that was used for most of the studies at the time, the Bilingual Syntax Measure (BSM). When you read the first article in this collection, you will see that I did find a positive correlation with the oral production tasks in my study, but clearly there was also a task effect, as illustrated by the learners' different performance on the reading and writing tasks. Stephen Krashen(1978) explained the uneven performance by saying that with the reading and writing tasks, learners can monitor their performance and therefore, the order on these tasks was not the spontaneous, natural one. In addition, I found that the L1 had some influence, so the order was clearly not universal. There was also individual variability — not everyone performed identically. Nevertheless, while correlation cannot be equated with causality, the positive correlation between the BSM and my oral production tasks, what I came to call an accuracy order rather than an acquisition order, warranted an explanation.

After considering many explanations, I found a significant positive correlation between the oral production order and the frequency order in English native speaker speech. There were no electronic corpora available in those days, so for the morpheme count for native speaker speech, I turned to the morpheme frequencies in the parental speech from Brown's study. I later found a positive correlation by analyzing the speech of two ESL teachers speaking to their students (Larsen-Freeman, 1976). What caused me some consternation, however, was my finding that there was a significant positive correlation between the accuracy order and the frequency of morpheme use in adult native speaker speech. Frankly, I did not know what to do with this finding. On the one hand, it could easily have been seen to be evidence in support of behaviorism and stimulus-response conditioning. On the other hand, it could be said to support

cognitivism. In other words, it could be that frequently-occurring morphemes give learners greater opportunity to figure out the rules. In either case, due to the variability, it seemed that L2 acquisition could not be seen to be the product of an innate syllabus. My work taught me an important lesson. Frequency effects may be important, but we still need a theory in order to interpret our findings. I will return to this lesson later in this book.

A related endeavor at this time, following the example of L1 acquisition researchers, involved looking for developmental sequences in second language learners. Developmental sequences differ from acquisition orders in that they are concerned with single areas of syntax. For example, a significant project was undertaken by Cazden, Cancino, Rosansky, and Schumann (1975), who investigated English negation development in six Spanish speakers learning English. In the intellectual spirit of the day, researchers sought to identify universal sequences of development, in some cases more successfully than in others. Another significant study, this time conducted in Germany (Meisel, 1977) on the interlanguage of guest workers learning German naturalistically, also established a common order of acquisition of certain structures in German.[1]

What I learned from the morpheme research was that there was a clear interaction between the learner and the environment. While the morpheme research was not very sophisticated — unacceptably so by today's standards — at the time, the notion that we should look to characteristics of the linguistic environment to explain learners' performance was renewed. Evelyn Hatch was one of the leading proponents of the need to do this. Writing in 1978 (p.409), Hatch observed, "one learns how to do conversation, one learns how to interact verbally and out of this interaction syntactic structures are developed". Such comments inspired me to edit my first book, *Discourse Analysis and Second Language Research* (Larsen-Freeman, 1980), and Michael Long to conduct research for his dissertation on the role of input and interaction in second language acquisition (SLA) (1980). Many other scholars have followed, of course, and the nature of the input and interaction in SLA has been fertile ground to plow.

Earlier, I mentioned variability in learner performance. Starting from its earliest days, there has been a bifurcation in the field (Hatch, 1974), with some researchers focusing on the process of SLA and others on second language learners, especially on the question of their differential success, i.e. why second language learners differed from the first in their level of achievement and why second language learners differed among

themselves. Over the years, there has been abundant research reporting on learner individual difference factors, such as age, aptitude, attitude, motivation, personality, strategies, and cognitive style. It is, of course, beyond what I can do in this brief introduction to discuss what we have learned from such important research here. What I can say, though, is that individual differences are usually studied as group phenomena. One group of learners, e.g. highly motivated learners, are compared with another group of lesser motivated students. In addition, there have been a number of important case studies in the field, focusing on learners as individuals. I believe that we especially need more of the latter to act as "correctives" on leading theories of the day. I will return to this point later.

One other important influence in the evolution of SLA research, which I should call attention to in this Introduction, is the increased attention given to the social dimension of language acquisition. As I have already mentioned, the modern study of SLA began in the 1970s and was born out of the cognitive revolution. Certainly, there have been researchers who were trying to direct the field to more socially-situated positions (e.g. Tarone, 1979), but much of the original research and much carried out since then has focused on the cognitive or psycholinguistic understanding of SLA. However, beginning in the 1980s and expanding in the 1990s and beyond, attention has been given to more socially relevant matters. For example, researchers have attempted to understand changes in learners' social participation in the L2-speaking communities to which they aspire to belong as they move in from a marginal status to a less-peripheral one. Along with these foci has come a heightened "critical awareness". This awareness concerns issues of power and ideology — e.g. which languages are recognized and taught and which are not — and inequitable practices — e.g. denying certain populations access to instructed language study where their L1 is used before they are L1-literate — can have profound consequences for language learning success. I will discuss these powerful influences in the field in more detail later in this book.

As time went on, I personally wrestled with other professional issues as well. I was concerned that simply multiplying the number of factors we had to take into account of was not getting us closer to understanding the SLA process. Moreover, experimental attempts to find statistical significance by controlling all but one of the factors yielded findings of suspect ecological validity. Besides, I decried the reductionism implicit in such attempts, i.e. that we could unravel the mysteries of the SLA

process one by one and then add them up to come up with an overall understanding. I was also convinced, especially given the individual variability in the process I observed, that language learning was not a matter of finding or replicating a universal L2 system in the head, nor was language teaching a matter of transposing such a system from the teacher's head to that of the learner's. At the very least, I reasoned, we needed a more dynamic view of language and its learning. Ultimately, these concerns led me to consider and commit to a new theory, Complexity Theory, about which I will have much to write in this book.

Following this Introduction is one of my early publications — on my attempt to explain the morpheme "acquisition" order. After it, and after every other article in this volume, I will comment in order to show what I have learned and how my thinking has evolved. As you read, I ask that you attempt to understand each article in its own time. It is not difficult to read an article published decades ago and to find fault with it using today's consciousness. However, attempting to understand what motivated a particular position at a particular time is a good scholarly practice, I think.

I should add one other caveat to this Introduction. The study of SLA was initiated to investigate the study of "natural", i.e. untutored language acquisition. It was recognized early on that instruction introduced a number of other variables that made understanding a complex process even more complicated. Much later, an offshoot to this central tendency was established, which was called "instructed second language acquisition". Much of the current review, however, deals with natural SLA while recognizing that the effects of instruction cannot just be layered on after we figure out the natural process. That said, I, personally, have always been interested in teaching. Thus, in some of my writings and in some of my commentary in this book, pedagogical implications of SLA research will be identified.

Perhaps the subtitle to this book is already clear: the journey of my development as an SLA researcher and theoretician has been one of continuous expansion, in parallel with the field. We have come to realize that the SLA process is multidimensional and that no simple explanation will suffice. I will return to this theme of expansion throughout the remainder of this book.

Notes

1. There is a geographic limitation in what I present in this book, as initially

much of the work that was conducted as SLA research was done in Canada, the United States, and Western Europe. This has changed, and now more SLA research is being carried out across the world.

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