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Nicole Tracy-Ventura
Northern Arizona University

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PROBLEMS IN SLA. *Michael H. Long*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2007. Pp. v + 201. $75.95 cloth, $27.50 paper.

Long's lengthy and productive career as a specialist in SLA affords him exceptional experience and perspective to write about the field, and his latest work does not disappoint. This volume is divided into three sections of unequal lengths: "Theory," "Research," and "Practice." There is a copious list of references, and Long introduces many interesting citations and topics that are new, even to a veteran scholar like me.

Long builds his discussion of theory on a carefully constructed foundation in the philosophy of science, accepting the existence of multiple and often conflicting theories in the field, but arguing that, ultimately, scientific progress can only be achieved if these ideas are constantly tested and challenged so that more elegant and accurate observations of SLA can eventually emerge. In the two chapters that comprise the research section, the lengthiest section of his volume, Long argues forcefully for the existence of age-related constraints on language acquisition and for the efficacy of recasts in language teaching. Again, due to the author's expertise in these areas of inquiry, old and new research studies are thoroughly reviewed, analyzed, and appraised. The final practice section covers two quite disparate topics: a detailed review of task-based instruction and a trenchant defense of theories and scientific research against a variety of criticisms recently made about their relevance to SLA inquiry.

Given Long's scholarly interest and the title of his work, obviously there is much to read here that deals with models of language acquisition and their assessment, but, surprisingly, there is also a great deal here that is relevant to classroom practice. Chapter 4, "Recasts in SLA: The Story So Far," and chapter 5, "Texts, Tasks, and the Advanced Learner," both report on relevant research findings and introduce some practical suggestions for classroom teaching. Still, the most interesting chapter is the final one, in which Long launches a wide-ranging and polemical defense of SLA theory and research against social relativists and postmodernists. Here, in sometimes witty and sometimes acerbic prose, he critiques specific authors and articles and goes so far as to question the competence of certain journals to function as reputable gatekeepers for the profession.

Any reader familiar with the author's long-standing work in the field will not be surprised to find that he uses Krashen's now outdated monitor theory as an illustration of how SLA theories can be assessed and found wanting. Nevertheless, irrespective of the validity of Long's assessment, I think it is helpful to point out that some theories become popular either because they are promoted to be pedagogically useful, are perceived as such, or both. Indeed, this is exactly the reason why Krashen's model remains the best known of all the models promulgated by SLA specialists, even though, as Long has

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correctly and consistently demonstrated, it has many theoretical limitations, has not been supported by research, and has been superseded by more effective hypotheses.

For a volume as comprehensive and as well referenced as this and for an author so experienced, it is surprising to find that certain key SLA topics, such as corpus studies, expert language learners, and fossilization, are barely even mentioned. Also, for me, the most challenging problem for our field, as well as for linguistics in general, is the way in which the lay public misperceives both language acquisition and use. To compound this problem, the media tends to focus almost exclusively on these misperceptions during the few times it chooses to deal with language matters. For example, I have continually been mortified to see that SLA research that supports claims for a critical period has been misused, magnified, and metastasized to justify the introduction of English to younger and younger groups of learners around the globe. Nevertheless, it is instructive to remember that this is Long's work, not a long one, and, overall, he has covered many issues comprehensively and incisively, and he has covered them well.

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Thomas Scovel
San Francisco State University

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IDEAS AND OPTIONS IN ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES. *Helen Basturkmen*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2006. Pp. xi + 186. $19.95 paper.

Various approaches to teaching English for specific purposes (ESP) are examined in this volume, with a view toward encouraging readers to take a critical stance. The work aims to fill a gap in the existing ESP literature, which Basturkmen argues has "tended to focus on practical issues" rather than on "ideas of *learning* languages for specific purposes" (p. 5). Another goal is to investigate whether "ESP has been a force for accommodation" (p. 6), serving the interests of discourse communities rather than ESP learners themselves.

The volume has three parts. Part 1 explains the motivation for the volume (chapter 1) and provides a framework to examine ESP (chapter 2). This framework proposes that ESP be viewed in terms of instructors' ideas regarding language, learning, and teaching. In chapter 3, ESP course design is explored. Part 2 introduces language systems in ESP teaching and research, functional descriptions of language, language learning theories, and ESP teaching methodologies and objectives. Part 3 analyzes two ESP projects using the framework from Part 1.

Chapters 4–10 are the core of the text. Chapter 4 discusses language systems, grammatical structures, vocabulary, and organizational patterns. In chapter 5, ways of describing language are introduced. Here, the emphasis is on speech acts, genres, social interaction, and concordances. Chapter 6 explains how language descriptions can inform ESP teaching and research. The focus of chapter 7 is on successful learning, including such issues as social and psychological distance and task-based instruction. In chapter 8, the processes of language acquisition are described, followed by a discussion of knowledge, information processing, and content-based instruction. The emphasis shifts to teaching methodologies in chapter 9, which highlights input and output in instructional strategies. Finally, chapter 10 considers ESP teaching objectives.

There is a discussion of key concepts, relevant research, and applications for each topic covered in the core chapters, followed by questions and projects for further reflec-

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