



WILEY

---

Review

Reviewed Work(s): Computer Learner Corpora, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching by Sylviane Granger, Joseph Hung and Stephanie Petch-Tyson

Review by: Mark Davies

Source: *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 88, No. 3 (Autumn, 2004), pp. 469-470

Published by: Wiley on behalf of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3588793>

Accessed: 08-06-2020 17:17 UTC

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations, Wiley* are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Modern Language Journal*

paradigm in the chapter and concludes with reflective remarks. The number of exercises per chapter is extensive, ranging from 13 to 25. Also, some of the exercises contain multiple tasks.

This unique approach provides ample opportunities to think about what is involved during data collection, analysis, and interpretation. Concrete examples also make it easy for students to think about their own research projects. In addition, clear explanations and exercises enable students to understand important concepts in depth. For example, descriptive and inferential statistics in chapters 5 through 7 seem easier to follow than explanations in other texts because they are introduced in contexts relevant to the audience of the book, such as learner and teacher beliefs, language test scores, and vocabulary learning tasks. The relevance of the topics will make computational exercises meaningful as well.

However, the authors acknowledge that instructors who are used to a conventional textbook format with exercises at the end of each chapter may find features of the textbook problematic. Given its inductive approach, starting with exercises and then providing explanations, instructors unfamiliar with this approach may need to spend considerable time familiarizing themselves with the format. Users of the book will need to select exercises, a process that will take time, because some exercises lead to other exercises or are discussed in the main text. It would have been helpful had the book included a road map or an instructor's manual.

The approach taken in the book may not be suitable for self-study. The main body of the text is frequently interrupted by exercises, and the text sometimes does not make sense without working on exercises. Therefore, it takes considerable time for readers unfamiliar with research design to go through the book. Also, many of the exercises call for pair or group work. Although care is taken to help self-study users compare their own data with those of the textbook, the open-ended nature of many of the exercises may make it difficult to understand them without discussion. For these reasons, it may be hard for students who do not have a background in research design to go through this book on their own.

Instructors may wish to supplement with materials that provide comparisons among different techniques within each research paradigm. Because each chapter focuses on one type of research, such as developmental case study, verbal report, and interaction analysis, discussion of other types of research is rather limited. For ex-

ample, discussions of ethnography, discourse analysis, conversational analysis, retrospection, and stimulated recall are limited or, in a few cases, not included.

Finally, the textbook is primarily based on English as a second language data, so instructors who teach student teachers or future teachers of foreign languages may wish to supply exercises with foreign language data.

Even with these limitations, the innovativeness of *Doing Second Language Research* cannot be ignored. It is probably the only textbook that makes a serious attempt to get students to work on research activities in an integrated fashion.

YUKIKO ABE HATASA

*University of Iowa*

---

GRANGER, SYLVIANE, JOSEPH HUNG, & STEPHANIE PETCH-TYSON. (Eds.). *Computer Learner Corpora, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*. Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2002. Pp. viii, 245. \$80.00, cloth; \$35.95, paper. ISBN 1-58811-293-4, cloth; 1-58811-294-2, paper.

---

Within the past 5 years or so, a new type of corpus has begun to be used for the analysis of second language (L2) acquisition. Learner corpora, which provide large amounts of output from language learners, provide valuable data on L2 performance that can provide insight into such phenomena as the overuse and underuse of L2 structure, avoidance strategies, and interlanguage effects.

The book under review is a state-of-the-art compilation of articles on learner corpora. Editor Sylviane Granger is the main developer of the most well-known learner corpus, the International Corpus of Learner English, which contains 2 million words of written English from learners in 20 countries. In her introduction, she addresses the typology of learner corpora (spoken vs. written, annotated vs. nonannotated, etc.), as well as some of the basic issues involved in corpus design and production. Most important, she provides a valuable overview of how learner corpora can provide data on L2 acquisition and on how the data may be used to improve the methodology of L2 teaching.

The subsequent seven articles build on the foundation set by Granger. The first three articles deal with the corpus evidence for inter-

language effects in the acquisition of English as a second language (ESL). B. Altenberg ("Using Bilingual Corpus Evidence in Learner Corpus Research") considers causatives in Swedish and French; K. Aijmer ("Modality in Advanced Swedish Learners' Written Interlanguage") investigates modality in Swedish and German; and A. Housen ("A Corpus-Based Study of the L2 Acquisition of the English Verb System") deals with the verbal system of French and Dutch learners.

The article by F. Meunier ("The Pedagogical Value of Native and Learner Corpora in EFL Grammar Teaching") is a useful discussion of the ways in which insights from corpora have led to advancements in L2 reference materials (e.g., reference grammars, dictionaries), but how few of these insights have found their way into L2 textbooks. A. Hasselgren ("Learner Corpora and Language Testing: Small Words as Markers of Learner Fluency") suggests that small words ("OK," "well," etc.) can serve as reliable indicators of overall L2 fluency. U. Connor, K. Precht, and T. Upton ("Business English: Learner Data from Belgium, Finland and the U.S.") show how rhetorical strategies in job applications are often problematic for L2 learners and how they are often a function of the first language culture. Q. Allan ("The TELEC Secondary Learner Corpus: A Resource for Teacher Development") discusses the use of learner corpora in addressing the specific needs of ESL students and teachers in Hong Kong. Finally, B. Seidlhofer ("Pedagogy and Local Learner Corpora: Working with Learning-Driven Data") explains the value of peer review of learner corpora.

There are two general aspects of the book that deserve mention. First, it is interesting to note that six of the eight articles are from researchers in Europe and that, therefore, the volume reflects a methodological orientation that may differ from that of North America. More important is the fact that all of the articles deal with learner corpora in the context of learning and teaching English and that there is no mention of learner corpora in any other language. Whereas an earlier volume (Granger, *Learner English on Computer*, 1998) was explicit in its focus on English, one might have hoped that the focus would be less narrow in the present volume.

Yet the emphasis on learner English from a European perspective is not an intentional omission of other research, but rather is a function of current trends in the field. Regarding the Eurocentric focus, for example, one finds that there are a number of well-established conferences such as the Teaching and Language Corpora (TALC) conference in Europe, whereas groups

such as the North American Association on Applied Corpus Linguistics (NAAACL) are still in their infancy and are still largely influenced by a European presence. Regarding the English-centric focus, a review of proceedings from these two conferences during the past 5 years shows that at least 90% of all publications have dealt exclusively with corpora relating to ESL.

Nevertheless, the field may slowly be becoming less linguocentric. For example, in response to a recent query to the CORPORA listserv, several researchers did note projects that have been initiated with non-English learner corpora, although most of these are recent and have not yet yielded any relevant publications. Researchers of other languages will eventually be able to mine learner corpora to provide the same level of insight into L2 learning as is shown for English in the present volume.

MARK DAVIES

*Brigham Young University*

---

GUBBINS, PAUL, & MIKE HOLT. (Eds.). *Beyond Boundaries: Language and Identity in Contemporary Europe*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters, 2002. Pp. vi, 162. \$79.95, cloth; \$29.95, paper. ISBN 1-85359-556-X, cloth; 1-85359-555-1, paper.

---

Sociolinguistic and sociocultural variation and diversity on the periphery (e.g., world Englishes, Francophonie, and national Spanishes) have become widely accepted concepts in second- and foreign-language education. But what happens when the data and analysis from nuanced and thoughtful research, such as those presented in *Beyond Boundaries: Language and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, suggest that the French native speaker in France may no longer be considered exclusively French, or that the native speaker of Spanish in Spain is not uniquely or unproblematically Spanish? The complexity of identity in European countries such as France, Spain, and England puts into doubt cherished beliefs of nativeness and authenticity that continue to reside in these ideologically privileged centers of world language and culture. How do language education and language educators, whose very existence is largely defined in terms of the native standard language, deal with the authentically native bilingual, multilingual, and intercultural speakers of Spanish or French or English whose language and culture practices do not necessar-