

Key Terms in Second Language Acquisition. Bill VanPetten and Alessandro G. Benati. (2010). Continuum International Publishing Group.

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Many are the theories that surround SLA research. Throughout history, there have been a great deal of attempts to decipher how individuals acquire a foreign language and which the processes involved are. Therefore, when starting research into this field, it is quite complicated to have a thorough knowledge of all the terms and theories which have been presented so far. In addition, one might be doubtful about which area of the discipline arouses a higher degree of interest.

Key Terms in Second Language Acquisition is undoubtedly the answer to anybody wishing to conduct research into SLA. The book is divided into three different sections. In the first one, «Key Issues in Second Language Acquisition», the authors give an answer to questions which have been of paramount importance to SLA research, namely «Can L2 learners become native-like?», «Is there a critical period?», «Does instruction make a difference?», etc. The second one, «Key Terms in Second Language Acquisition», can be regarded as an SLA encyclopedia. The reader is provided with a good number of key terms in SLA literature. Nevertheless, the list is not exhaustive and only the most recurrent terms are included. In the third and final section, «Key Readings in Second Language Acquisition», not only are we presented with references cited in this book, but also other references which might be of use to anyone interested in this field or carrying out research into SLA.

Each of the three sections contains current trends on the subject matter, as well as a personal assessment by the authors, which open up new avenues of investigation. Furthermore, we are also provided with the names of major figures specialized in each particular research field, allowing, thus, to explore that particular field thoroughly. The authors also emphasize the main focus of research in every area, and since the goal of this book is to offer the basics for novice readers and not to be exhaustive, we can state that this goal has successfully been reached. The book only gives a general perspective for those wishing to embark on SLA research.

It is worth mentioning the fact that all terms described in the «Key Issues and Terms» sections are in bold type, as they are described in the «Key Terms» section. This is one of the reasons why this book is useful to both researchers and novice readers, as the latter find it easy to absorb all the new information they receive. It is definitely a key book to guiding students towards research into this field and to organize the knowledge they already possess.

