

STEVEN MCDONOUGH. **Applied Linguistics in Language Education**. 2000. Arnold, London. Pp. 177.

In this volume, M focuses on the theory of applied linguistics in teaching a second language (L2) and analyzes practical situations in the language classroom. Using real life examples from his teaching experience, M successfully captures the reader's attention at the onset of the first chapter of the book. Not only does he provide information from language learning classrooms, but he also carefully brings up topics and questions that are related to L2 teaching and learning. The twelve chapters with different topics are divided into four sections covering the established fields in language education.

The first section contains two chapters that give an overview of the origin of applied linguistics and its vital role in language education. M claims that "applied linguistics and language teaching are not identical but share many common interests. Many applied linguists are also language teachers; many more used to be" (17). Moreover, he outlines four central questions that applied linguistics faces as a discipline. These problems (knowing a language, practice and theory, the nature of theory, and research traditions) are discussed with "an attempt to clarify what kind of subject applied linguistics is" (18) and in what other areas applied linguistics is deemed useful, such as neuro-linguistics, computational linguistics, and translation theory.

Issues in the second section show important topics and methods for successful integration of teaching practice and materials. Fundamental questions are raised about "whether language teachers need a theory of language in order to teach, and about how much these teachers need to understand a language to teach it" (29). After asking those questions, the author considers the necessity and advantage of knowing descriptive linguistics' principles to apply them in classrooms. A teacher who is able to explain some

linguistic features would have a stronger position than one who handles the argument by using authority – “it’s like that”, “it’s an exception”, or “it’s less formal” (33). This is an interesting point for language teachers to ask themselves about their knowledge and authority in the L2 classrooms. The problem that M explores in this chapter helps serious teachers reflect on their L2 knowledge and their position as teachers.

The third part of this book deals with L2 acquisition. M first states that there is an obvious parallel between learning a foreign language and controlling a new vehicle. He reasons, “people are all native speakers of a language, and learning a second or a third language is like adding a new code to principles already possessed. No language learner is required to relearn everything as a child acquires its mother language” (56). Then, he explains with more detail the difficulties that L2 learners face. I agree with M that learning a new language is a million times harder than adjusting to a new vehicle. When talking about the process of second language acquisition (SLA), M categorizes language learners under age, cognition and aptitude, personality, culture, style and preference, and motivation. He claims that understanding differences among learners would help language teachers apply their teaching methods effectively in their classrooms.

In the last section, M concentrates on the collaboration between applied linguists and practitioners and their contribution to SLA in the classroom. “These developments have taken place in a mutually collaborative manner, reminiscent of the idea that adopting a knowledgeable approach to these issues, with an awareness of both the practical decisions and the history of idea, is in itself ‘doing applied linguistics’” (104). After providing a shopping list of teaching methodologies, M brings up questions that engage the reviewer concerning how people learn to teach, what good language teaching is, how

language teachers develop, and how teachers become trainers. To tackle the above, M quotes many ideas from different linguists in the field, such as Wallace, Freeman, and Richard to support his claims.

The book offers a large amount of theoretical and practical information, but it needs more specific examples and explanations of how an L2 is used in classrooms to exemplify each topic or issue. For example, when M compares the use of pronouns in languages, he claims that English, French, and German require pronouns in specific phrases, and provides the example, “I understand French” (63). However, as M continues, other languages do not require pronouns; he fails to list illustrative examples. Besides lacking concrete examples to back up some of his claims, M cites many authors’ theories together with his own, which weakens his voice as the author. Despite these minor deficiencies, M succeeds in raising questions and outlining specific problems teachers face in their profession and the role of applied linguistics to solve them.

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