

# Preface

The present volume is intended as a tribute to Professor Danuta Gabryś-Barker, who is on the one hand, a dedicated, prolific and internationally known scholar, and, on the other, a mentor, a colleague, a dear friend, or all the three combined, for hundreds of applied linguists in Poland and across the world. Her contribution to the fields of second language acquisition, psycholinguistics, multilingualism, and teacher education, to name but a few, is immense and simply impossible to overestimate. This is evident not only in the multitude of conference presentations, including many plenary talks, her monographs, numerous journal papers, book chapters and the volumes she has edited or co-edited, but also in the fact that she is the co-editor of two journals: *International Journal of Multilingualism* (Routledge) and *Theory and Practice of Second Language Acquisition* (University of Silesia), a member of many editorial boards and a frequent reviewer. The papers included in the present volume, penned by well-known scholars from Poland and abroad, without doubt testify to the great esteem that Professor Gabryś-Barker enjoys in our field. In light of the main foci of her research, it is also fitting that this edited collection brings together publications approaching second language learning and teaching from a psycholinguistic perspective.

Following the definition provided by Garnham (1985), psycholinguistics “(...) is the study of the mental mechanisms that make it possible for people to use language (...)”. The scholar elaborates on his definition by explaining the main goal of the discipline which, in his opinion, is “(...) a coherent theory of the way in which language is produced and understood (...)”. Carroll (2008) complements the above-mentioned definition and presents two leading questions which he believes to be the heart of the discipline, namely: “What knowledge of language is needed for us to use language?” and “What cognitive processes are involved in the ordinary use of language?” In order to answer the questions posed by Carroll, one must first realize that psycholinguistics is an interdisciplinary domain which encompasses a variety of closely linked disciplines which are in need of thorough investigation. Second, with the geopolitical issues coming into play across the globe, the scope of psycholinguistics is rapidly growing and gradually embracing fairly new issues

which might shape future directions in the study of the discipline. The papers gathered in this volume bear witness to the challenges of this kind and, whether they are theoretical or empirical in nature, they are representative of the state-of-the-art developments in the field. The book has been divided into two main parts, one stressing the contribution of the learner and the other of the teacher.

The first part, *Learner-Related Variables in Second Language Acquisition*, brings together a total of eight contributions. Anna Michońska-Stadnik investigates one of the areas addressed by positive psychology (cf. MacIntyre & Mercer, 2014), namely the characteristics associated with an individual well-being, discussing students' opinions and beliefs concerning the extent to which the language learning process contributes to the development of selected life skills. Also within the framework of positive psychology, Rebecca L. Oxford re-explains the EMPATHICS model and its 18 elements, and, what is perhaps most important, adds to it and elaborates upon three elements, that is identity, investment and imagination, emphasizing that the model should serve the purpose of constantly improving the teaching process. Subsequently, Larissa Aronin and Ulrike Jessner concentrate on the concept of space-time (Aronin, 2014) and its implementation in researching multilingualism in different contexts as it shapes the identity of the individual, stressing the need to approach space-times as complex dynamic systems. Ewa Piechurska-Kuciel reports the results of a study conducted among over 600 adolescent Polish learners of English, which concerned their positive and negative perceptions of the target language, providing evidence for the perceived significance of the English language as a tool for communication in the globalized world. In the following paper, Mirosław Pawlak adopts the lens of the theory of the L2 motivational self-system (Dörnyei, 2009) in a questionnaire study of Polish university students majoring in English. He manages to demonstrate that although they are in general highly motivated and driven by propitious motives, pedagogic intervention is needed with respect to some areas, such as self-confidence and lack of fear of assimilation. Simone E. Pfenninger and David Singleton shift emphasis to the comparison of the ability of early and late learners to use the target language input and produce output, reporting the findings of a longitudinal study of 200 Swiss learners of English as L3 or L4, which focused on this ability in terms of its relationship to selected memory processes and age of onset. This is followed by a paper by Anna Niżegorodcew who seeks to establish a psycholinguistic profile of senior students learning English as a foreign language at the Third Age University on the basis of teachers' reflections and students' accounts of their experiences. Halina Chodkiewicz elaborates on the model of reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game proposed by Goodman (1967), explaining why it is problematic to assume that L2 readers can understand a text solely through top-down processing or infer the meanings of unfamiliar vocabulary with the aid of selected features of the visual input. Finally, the reprinted paper by the late Janusz Arabski focuses upon five consecutive stages of foreign vocabulary acquisition from a psycholinguistic perspective with reference to concepts touched upon in relevant publications on the subject.

The second part, *Aspects of Teacher Awareness in Second Language Education*, is also made up of eight papers. It opens with the contribution by Hanna Komorowska, who focuses on the role of conversational styles in foreign language education, stressing their importance in personal relations and pointing to the need to raise cross-cultural awareness because mismatches in this respect may generate misunderstandings and mistaken perceptions. Alison Phipps analyzes selected moments represented in the Pragmatics and Intercultural Communication (PIC) project and identifies four different ways in which laughter occurs, evaluating these in the context of the presentation of the self. In the following contribution, Liliana Piasecka zooms in on the issue of teacher job satisfaction, seeking to arrive at a portrait of an average English language teacher on the basis of empirical evidence from the TALIS 2013 survey (OECD, 2014) and data collected from Polish teachers of English as a foreign language. Maria Dakowska revisits the issues of authenticity and the use of authentic texts in teaching English as a foreign language, demonstrating how the psycholinguistic perspective can offer a point of reference for determining the nature and functions of authentic materials and their relevance to teachers. Andrzej Łyda presents the results of a corpus-based analysis of the usage of the words *precise* and *accurate* in academic spoken and written English, showing that this usage is dependent on specific contexts, with the two lexemes sometimes sharing the semantic space. Zbigniew P. Możejko presents selected pre-war materials used for teaching English as a foreign language and demonstrates that they are highly innovative, taking into account the latest developments in foreign language pedagogy. The last two contributions focus on foreign language teacher education, albeit in disparate educational contexts. First, Beata Malczewska-Webb, Alicia Vallero, Christian King, and Simon Hunter touch upon training teachers in virtual environments, presenting the theoretical framework which was developed for the needs of an online MA program at Bond University, Australia, and illustrating how online resources can effectively be used in such circumstances. Second, Eva Vetter, drawing on the work of Danuta Gabryś-Barker, discusses issues connected with foreign language education in Austria and considers the extent to which the concept of multilingualism can become part of the process of teachers' professional development.

We are convinced that the papers included in the volume will be of interest to all of those who are involved in investigating the fascinating phenomenon of learning additional languages, exploring the ways in which this process can be enhanced through instruction, and attempting to ensure that such instruction is provided by dedicated, highly qualified teachers. We are also confident that they will serve as a source of inspiration for a number of future research projects, many of which will build and expand upon the numerous, important contributions that Professor Gabryś-Barker has made to our field.

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