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0521339804 - Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning

Craig Chaudron

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# Second Language Classrooms

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learning

*Craig Chaudron*

University of Hawaii at Manoa



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For my mother, Eleanor,  
and the memory of my father, Cliff,  
who introduced me to the world of languages

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## *Series editors' preface*

The Cambridge Applied Linguistics Series (CALS) provides a forum for the best new work in applied linguistics by those in the field who are able to relate theory, research, and teaching practice. Craig Chaudron's book fulfills this criterion admirably.

Classroom-centered research has already contributed a great deal to our understanding of what actually goes on in second language classrooms, as opposed to what we sometimes think goes on or are told should go on. In *Second Language Classrooms: Research on Teaching and Learning*, Chaudron offers a comprehensive overview and synthesis of theory and research on foreign and second language classroom processes. He summarizes the results of numerous studies of teacher and student classroom behaviors and teacher-student interaction, and looks at how such behavior affects language learning. Also included are conclusions drawn from his own work on teacher speech, error correction, and classroom discourse.

Many gaps remain in our knowledge of the relationship between language learning and what goes on in the classroom, and Chaudron therefore offers methodological suggestions for future studies. We hope that readers of this book will be inspired to initiate research that will fill in these gaps and enhance our knowledge of how language is learned.

Michael H. Long  
Jack C. Richards  
*University of Hawaii at Manoa*

## *Preface*

This book reviews classroom-based research and attempts to provide confirming or disconfirming evidence for claims about the influence of language instruction and classroom interaction on language learning. This is achieved by comparing studies that describe teachers' and learners' behaviors in classrooms and synthesizing them into generalizations about the processes that take place in second language classrooms. Studies that point to relationships between these behaviors and second language development are also summarized. Classroom teachers, school administrators, teacher trainers, and second language researchers should all find in the review of these relationships useful implications for language teaching, language curriculum development, and further research goals. Theories and claims about language teaching methods, effective curriculum, or the importance of learner characteristics have rarely been based on actual research in language classrooms, despite the integral role that classroom teaching and learning plays in theoretical and practical proposals.

Also, professionals involved in first language pedagogy should find many methods and principles relevant to their educational context, because studies of second language instruction have addressed issues analogous to those in native language educational research, and the goals of the research are quite similar. In second language (L2) research the greater attention to the linguistic phenomena involved can afford some important perspectives for first language (L1) researchers. A linguistic focus has been evident in much L1 classroom research (e.g., Bellack et al. 1966; Cazden, John, and Hymes 1972; Wilkinson 1982), yet L2 researchers have at times maintained greater precision about the nature of the linguistic phenomena and greater caution in interpreting the meaningfulness of classroom events for the participants. In L2 research, the intelligibility and meaning of classroom language for learners is the primary focus of investigation. L1 researchers and teachers should, therefore, also find in this book valuable information and perspectives about classroom teaching and learning.

The survey and discussion in this book is perhaps most relevant to current and future researchers of L2 classroom behaviors and processes,

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who should benefit from the comparison of methodologies and results of different classroom research, and from the focus on the theoretical foundations for the investigation of classroom processes. It is hoped that the conclusions reached in the book and the directions suggested for future studies will lead researchers to investigate more carefully claims regarding L2 teaching and learning and to adopt new methods and goals in their research.

The author wishes to thank many individuals for their contributions to the development of this book. In particular, Mike Long and Jack Richards have been extraordinarily supportive and understanding throughout; their initial suggestion and encouragement was the impetus for me to write the book. They have both read drafts of all the chapters and provided useful comments. Mike Long has, especially, followed the book through various drafts, always with a calm and helpful prod to proceed. He has significantly influenced the content of the book, providing references and insightful critiques at many points, including comments throughout the final draft manuscript. I have too few ways in which to thank him.

Graham Crookes and Bernie Mohan also read the entire final draft and provided extensive suggestions for improvement in content and style. Their assistance has been most helpful. Several others have read chapters of the book and offered critical comments on style, coverage, and accuracy. I am grateful to Mary McGroarty, Ruth Cathcart, Fred Genesee, Dick Day, and R. Keith Johnson. I appreciate the time they have spent; their expert advice has been an incentive to provide more detail in several crucial areas.

I also appreciate the help that other colleagues and students have given me over many years, although they may not recognize the benefits I have reaped in discussions with them on the issues dealt with here. I thank especially Dick Allwright, Charlie Sato, Claus Faerch, Gabi Kasper, Mike Strong, Kathi Bailey, Maria Fröhlich, Steve Gaies, Nina Spada, Brina Peck, Evelyn Hatch, Leo van Lier, Peter Shaw, Patsy Lightbown, Tere Pica, Cindy Brock, Kathy Rulon, Patsy Duff, J. D. Brown, Sue Gass, and Catherine Snow. I must also mention here my lasting debt to my early mentors in classroom research, especially Merrill Swain, and Patrick Allen and H. H. Stern. Although we have seldom interacted while I was writing this book, their initial confidence in my work and their influence on me has remained with me in countless ways.

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