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Vocabulary studies are rooted in and motivated by practical concerns such as second language teaching and learning as vocabulary knowledge constitutes one of the most basic and essential parts of language proficiency (Schmitt, 2014). A systematic review of the research in vocabulary studies will inform both vocabulary researchers and language teachers on how to research and teach vocabulary. In this sense, the book under review provides timely and insightful perspectives.

This book consists of four main parts, each focusing on a major area of vocabulary research: corpus linguistics, psycholinguistics, testing, and teaching and learning. Within each part, the first chapter overviews the area, describing its key aims and theoretical ideas. The second chapter raises fundamental considerations which are crucial to all research in the area. The third chapter expounds in detail the important research tools and methods in the area. The final chapter of each part illustrates the key topics, showcasing how the ideas and methods are put to practical cases and guiding readers to the cutting-edge research. The same structure and clear division of topics greatly increase readability. Besides the main parts, the book starts with an introduction part (Part I) that outlines the key concepts of vocabulary research and ends with a concluding part (Part VI) that explores how to work across the four main areas and points to areas for future development.

Part II, Describing vocabulary in use: Corpus linguistics, mainly illustrates how the tools and methods in corpus linguistics can aid or inform vocabulary research. Corpus linguistic research can address multiple vocabulary-related issues such as how words are used in contexts, how vocabulary differs across contexts or registers, how second language develops, and how to create and evaluate pedagogical materials.
Part III, Examining vocabulary in the mind: Psycholinguistics approaches, examines how vocabulary-related issues are addressed by psycholinguistic methods such as online measures (e.g., lexicial decision tasks, grammaticality judgement tasks), reaction time (RT) measures, self-paced reading, eye movements, event-related brain potentials (ERPs), and tasks used in studying spoken and written productive language use. All these methods tap into the unconscious and implicit dimensions of vocabulary knowledge, which in turn can inform L1 and L2 vocabulary research, teaching and learning.

Part IV, Measuring vocabulary knowledge: Vocabulary testing, reviews the different methods and techniques to investigate the workings of vocabulary tests. Considering their importance as both pedagogical and research tools, vocabulary researchers endeavour to understand what and how tests assess and to develop prominent tests for research and pedagogical purposes. Three key topics are elaborated in great detail: test item formats, coganate effect, and sample effect.

Part V, Understanding vocabulary development: teaching and learning, explores how various research tools and methods can be applied to interpret the complex process in L2 lexical development.

With its comprehensive coverage of vocabulary research, this book provides a state-of-the-art overview of the diverse strands of inquiry and how they inform each other. It is an engaging read for those who aspire to gain systematic and up-to-date insights into vocabulary research, teaching and learning.

REFERENCES