

Exploring language aptitude: Views from psychology, the language sciences, and cognitive neuroscience. Susanne M. Reiterer (ed.) (2018)

RUI LI

School of Foreign Languages, Hunan University, China

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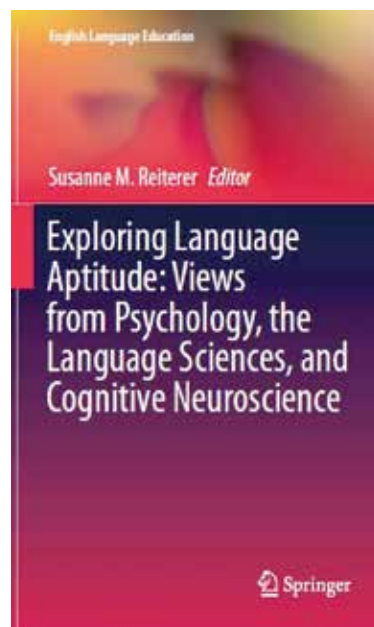
Language aptitude is a highly complex variable that influences student's second or foreign language attainment and learning outcomes, resulting in a central research interest in the field, as reflected in the interdisciplinary attempts that systematically explore the approaches, constituents and factors of students' aptitude in language learning. Drawing on the interdisciplinary frontiers of psychology, language sciences and cognitive neuroscience, the publication of this edited volume, as a joint effort of internationally-recognized experts, will provide valuable insights into the studies of second language acquisition, psycholinguistics and neurosciences.

In order to identify the factors that affect language aptitude, such as cognitive abilities, musicality, gender and age, the volume is organized into the following five strands: the relationship of language aptitude and memory, psychological factors, neuroscience and musicality, socio-environmental influences together with pronunciation. It features an introduction with an overview about the interdisciplinary understanding of language aptitude.

Part 1 includes three chapters that deal with language aptitude in the context of memory studies. The topics of this part are the different memory functions on language aptitude, aptitude of vocabulary acquisition and influence of working memory on second language vocabulary acquisition.

Part 2, consisting of two chapters, is devoted to the effects of psychological factors on language aptitude. Specifically, the first chapter focuses on self-efficacy as a component of language aptitude in the acquisition of a specific vowel sound; and the second chapter examines motivation and personality in language aptitude.

By narrowing down the focus, Part 3 continues to examine language aptitude in relation to neuroscience and musicality. The main topics across the six chapters are the relationship between language aptitude and neuroanatomical correlates, music and preschoolers' language aptitude, individual differences in language aptitude, influence of speaking a tone language on music aptitude, musicality and grammar aptitude, along with the possible links between gender and language aptitude.



Apart from the aforementioned aspects, Part 4 investigates socio-environmental influences. Specifically, the first chapter focuses on vocabulary learning strategies and language aptitude, and the second chapter compares language aptitude and attitude. The next three chapters scrutinize the relationship between early multilingualism and language aptitude, the role of language aptitude in language attrition and language talent, respectively.

The remaining two chapters in Part 5 focus on language aptitude for pronunciation. The first chapter adopts a longitudinal study to examine factors affecting adult learners' pronunciation abilities, whereas the second investigates language learners' individual differences and language aptitude in second language phonology.

Exploring language aptitude from multiple perspectives, this volume will be an important research resource and supplemental reading for linguistic or neuroscience researchers, language instructors and learners alike. The interdisciplinary, yet connected themes ranging from social sciences to neurosciences make for compelling reading and will for years to come, both to establish a theoretical framework of the subject matter and shed light on innovative practices, within and beyond second language acquisition.