Guest Editors’ Introduction

Working Memory and SLA: Towards an Integrated Theory

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Recent years have witnessed an increasing number of empirical studies in second language acquisition (SLA) pointing to the important role of working memory (WM) in various aspects of L2 learning. Major findings of this body of research are outlined here, which is followed by a summary of potential limitations and caveats in research design and methodology. To address these issues, we draw on nomothetic WM theories and WM-SLA research insights to propose a theoretical model to conceptualize and measure the WM construct in specific SLA domains and activities. Basic tenets and principles of this integrated WM-SLA model are highlighted as well as their underlying rationale. Overall, it is argued here that such an integrated theory makes vital contribution to the advancement of WM-SLA research and practice.

Working Memory Models and Theories

Working memory (WM) generally refers to our human ability to briefly maintain and manipulate a very small amount of information in our immediate consciousness (Baddeley, 1992). Despite its limited capacity, WM has proved to be fundamental to many aspects of our daily life. For