Paola Escudero
Linguistic Perception and Second Language Acquisition
Explaining the attainment of optimal phonological categorization

In Linguistic Perception and Second Language Acquisition, Paola Escudero provides a detailed description, explanation, and prediction of how optimal second language (L2) sound perception is acquired, and presents three empirical studies to test the model's theoretical principles. The author introduces the L2 Linguistic Perception (L2LP) model, a new formal and comprehensive proposal which integrates, synthesizes, and improves on previous studies, and therefore constitutes the most explanatorily adequate account of the whole process of L2 sound acquisition. Specific hypotheses are proposed to account for different empirical studies showing that learners will initially manifest a perception that matches their optimal L1 perception. The model also predicts that the degree of mismatch between perception grammars will define the number and nature of the learning tasks.

With respect to L2 development, it is predicted that learners will either need to create new perceptual mappings and categories, or else adjust any existing mappings through the same learning mechanisms that operate in L1 acquisition. Finally, the model's hypotheses of separate perception grammars and language activation predict that learners will achieve optimal L2 perception while preserving their optimal L1 perception.

This book addresses questions of speech perception, phonetics, phonology, psycholinguistics, and language acquisition, and should therefore be of interest to researchers working in any of these areas.