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SAVILLE- TROIKE, Muriel
Introducing second language acquisition
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Introducing Second Language Acquisition, a brief but comprehensive book, was written by Muriel Saville- Troike in 2006 with the aim of providing fundamental knowledge about second language learning and offering help for language learners and teachers. Saville- Troike, a professor in the field of applied linguistics and second language acquisition (SLA), centres the chapters on three basic questions: What exactly does the L2 (second language) learner come to know? How does the learner acquire this knowledge? Why are some learners more successful? At the beginning of each chapter, in addition to a chapter preview giving cues about the content and the aims of the chapter, the author proposes a place for key terms filled in the following pages. She also advocates a few pages at the end of the each chapter to facilitate readers for self-study as well as suggestions for further reading. The intended audience of the book are primarily undergraduate and graduate learners. However, any person who is interested in second language acquisition and has knowledge in English comprehends the content with ease. The premise of the following paper is to critically analyse the chapters and to state strong and weak points.

Saville- Troike starts by defining the most basic terms and concepts in Chapter 1, since it is crucial to gain fundamental knowledge to construct meaningful networks within the frame of second language acquisition. In this chapter, the distinction between different types of second language is drawn and examples are stated clearly for each one. Emergence of SLA is shortly discussed and little emphasis is put on the way how the fields related to SLA namely linguistics and psychology correspond what to know, how to acquire and why there are differences between language learners in terms of the degree or the pace they acquire languages. The author mentions about what is emphasized by research studies in a short way. The strongest point of the chapter is the idea of exemplifying each term and concept, in addition, it uses simple language appropriately and logically to address large groups of

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readers. She ends up the chapter with a brief and clear summary and with an activities part proposed for readers to test themselves.

The second chapter aims at raising awareness of the prevalence of multilingualism and preparing readers by exploring nature of language learning and by explaining basic similarities and differences between first language (L1) and second language learning. The chapter starts with definitions of multilingualism. In this respect, it succeeds in combining definitions with shocking numbers of population of a language spoken as L1 or L2. Saville-Troike seems to agree on the motivation sources which are suggested by Crystal (1997) to be a multilingual for people born in a monolingual country. Then, she focuses on both L1 learning phenomena and L2 one. The natural order proposed for L1 learning is examined by connecting the order with the stages theorized by Piaget and innate capacity is criticised by proving that the ability to acquire language is not dependent upon only intellectual powers. The importance of social experience in L1 learning is clearly stated and exemplified. L1 and L2 learning are compared in details under three basic phases namely initial, intermediate, and final and visualized successfully with a compare-contrast matrix. Chomsky's view and problematic issues in the theory are emphasized and the content shifts to development of SLA which is investigated in term of schools of thought and language learning as well as summarized on a table. The chapter devotes the last sentences to explain social perspective of SLA. In the same breath, a brief summary, self-assessment corner, and further reading suggestions are included.

The third chapter focuses on the linguistics of second language acquisition. It intends characterizing the nature of language, defining interlanguage in respect to questioning linguistic approaches to SLA. Initially, the characteristics shared by all languages are listed and explained shortly. Early approaches to SLA in terms of contrastive analysis and error analysis are explained by constructing a bridge between theory and practice. In other words, the author exemplifies theoretical information. The author gives place for steps of error analysis suggested by Ellis (1994). Then the concept *interlanguage* is discussed. Saville-Troike compares and contrasts *universal grammar perspective* which tries to answer what the initial and final stages, discussed in previous chapter, are in SLA to *functional approaches* which emphasize the information content utterances and a system of communication. She concludes the chapter by stating that to gain an in-depth understanding of SLA analysing processes through more than one lens is needed.

In Chapter four, Saville-Troike deals with second language acquisition from psychological perspective by surveying several approaches. Their primary emphasis of attention determines the order of these approaches: approaches focusing on *language and brain*, those focusing on *learning processes*, and the ones focusing on *learner differences*. What is happening in the brain while languages are learned, and which parts of the brain are responsible for language learning are discussed in detail by stating a brief about the theorist. The author prefers using basic questions to clarify what have been explored along with research findings by means of the first approach category. Approaches which focus on learning process are explained through listing assumptions and principles which are claimed specifically for each approach. The last major concern of the chapter is to shed light on naming differences among language learners and how these differences affect second language acquisition. A famous documented case, Genie which is the evidence for critical period hypothesis is included to raise more awareness in addition to maintaining motivation. It is also agreed upon that real life situations or events enable knowledge to be conveyed in long term memory. It is worth to state that the author mentions briefly about learning strategies through the typology of O'Malley and Chamot (1987) while giving more emphasis

on other differences in terms of motivation, age, and learning styles. Finally, a page is employed to discuss the effects of multilingualism within the framework of the research conducted by Diaz and Klingler (1991).

In the fifth chapter, social contexts of SLA, required to use language appropriately and to communicate effectively, is verbalized. The main focus of the chapter is to survey *microsocial* factors dealing with the potential effects of different surroundings and *macrosocial* factors relating SLA to cultural, political, and educational settings. Beginning with what communicative competence is and how it differs in monolingual and multilingual contexts, the author expresses the effects of social issues in language acquisition. She analyses microsocial factors by dividing them into subheadings; L2 variation, input, and interaction. Some words are devoted on sociocultural theory in which interaction is the key concept due to the fact that not only it facilitates language learning but also it forces people to acquire languages (Brown, 2007). Subsequent to microsocial factors, the chapter shifts to survey on macrosocial factors at different levels in an ecological context. Within the completion of this chapter, SLA is viewed through accomplishment at creating semantic network from three disciplinary perspectives, namely linguistic, psychological, and social.

The next chapter is titled as *acquiring knowledge for L2 use* whose premise is to distinguish between knowledge learned for academic purposes and the knowledge for interpersonal functions. The author starts the chapter by defining competence and use through addressing what knowledge of language is required for different types of language use, and how activities in each L2 skill are achieved. Each subtitle is constructed on previous chapters in a logical way. In other words, the content aforementioned is enlarged and exemplified with research results. Briefly, the author surveys deeply the components of language knowledge grounded on academic or interactional competence through simple language appropriate for intended audience and with ample samples for each subheading.

The last chapter, *L2 learning and teaching* discusses what is known about the near-native competence, and how ultimate achievement levels are affected by individual and social groups. The author prefers using question forms to clarify the content. She devotes last words to propose some guidelines for L2 learning and teaching. At the end of the book, answer guide is provided for self-study questions in addition to a glossary part suggesting short descriptions of terms or concepts used in the chapters.

Analysed from different aspects, the book *Introducing Second Language Acquisition* is an essential resource for people interested in SLA. Appropriate language for intended audience integrated with Saville- Troike's extensive knowledge in SLA makes the book a masterpiece in the field. Seeking to explore the complex nature of second language acquisition, the work encourages readers to survey on the content.

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