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LANGUAGE TWO. By Heidi Dulay, Marina Burt, Stephen Krashen  
Pp. 315. Oxford University Press. 1982  
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It is a truism to say that language learning is not easy. It is not surprising, therefore, that, any recipes claiming to facilitate this process are eagerly and enthusiastically adopted. Equally often, however, they are subsequently discarded by doubting critics. Language teaching methodology has witnessed the rise of numerous approaches which came into vogue only to be vehemently rejected, and the appearance of several methods which quickly lost popularity. Giving recipes for easy success in language learning may seem a fairly risky thing to do.

And yet in the opening chapter of "Language Two" the authors - leading specialists in the field - offer us an optimistic perspective on learning a second language. It can be exciting and productive, they claim, and end in the acquisition of native-like proficiency. What is more, "to be successful a learner need not have a special inborn talent for learning languages. Learners and teachers simply have to 'do it right'". /p.3/

How can we ever be sure that we are "doing it right"? Dulay, Burt and Krashen do not, in fact, provide much practical advice for L<sub>2</sub> teachers. Of the eleven chapters, only the last one focuses on "teaching guidelines", and these are tentative implications rather than firm principles. The preceding chapters are devoted to a detailed discussion of the theoretical issues of second language acquisition /SLA/. This, however, should not imply that the book is of no value for practising teachers. On the contrary, there is no doubt that the information it supplies about natural learning processes will be instructive and inspiring to anyone in any way involved in language teaching.

The authors start with an assumption that the last two decades of SLA research have led to certain very important discoveries, pertinent to the nature of the process of L<sub>2</sub> learning<sup>1</sup>. References to these findings are made throughout the whole book. Thus, the following phenomena have been documented by substantial experimental evidence:

/i/ A "silent period" /"comprehension period"/ at the beginning of instruction facilitates later acquisition.

/ii/ The existence of real "communicative needs" in the classroom speeds up acquisition.

/iii/ There exists an "affective filter"/encompassing a variety of factors, e.g. anxiety level, motivation, peer-identification, etc./, which accounts for the qualitative and quantitative differences between the environmental linguistic "input" and the learner-specific "intake".

/iv/ There exists the common order in which  $L_2$  structures are learned, not necessarily corresponding to the gradation of material in  $L_2$  course-books.

/v/ Certain "transitional constructions" produced by  $L_2$  learners are predictable and do not depend on the learner's  $L_1$  background.

/vi/ Very few of the  $L_2$  learners' errors can be unambiguously attributed to the transfer from  $L_1$ .

/vii/ Correction of grammatical errors does not seem to produce great improvement.

/viii/ At least some  $L_2$  learners have access to an internal process of "monitoring", i.e. editing their  $L_2$  production according to consciously learned rules.

One of the basic concepts permeating through the book is the authors' Creative Construction Model of language acquisition. The term "creative construction" is used with reference to subconscious processes by which the language learners "gradually organize the language they hear, according to rules that they construct to generate sentences". /p.11/ The Creative Construction Model is a revised version of a theoretical model suggested earlier by Dulay and Burt /e.g. Dulay and Burt 1976/. It includes three groups of factors pertinent to the final form of the learner's linguistic output: linguistic environment /both macro-environmental factors, such as natural exposure, formal instruction, attitude towards target language models etc., and micro-environmental factors, viz. salience, feedback, and frequency/, internal processing, and additional variables /e.g. personality, age, first language/.

It seems justifiable to say that it is the internal processing that constitutes the key concept in Duley, Burt and Krashen's perception of SLA mechanisms. The authors claim to have founded their assumptions on "best inferences about the mental processes involved in SLA /.../ based on numerous analyses of the data available on verbal performance and the effects of the language environment". /p.45/ The three internal processors governing L<sub>2</sub> acquisition are believed to be "the filter", "the organizer", and "the monitor", of which the first two are subconscious. The filter comprises a variety of affective factors which screen out certain aspects of L<sub>2</sub> input, and decide about the form of "intake". The organizer is that part of L<sub>2</sub> learner's mind which subconsciously and gradually builds up the learner's system of rules, organizing the intake by systematic progression through transitional constructions.

The concept of the monitor - the conscious processor - is basically the same as the one suggested earlier by Krashen /e.g. Krashen 1977/. Krashen's original views have only slightly been modified. The authors of "Language Two" mention more conditions as relevant for the use of the monitor, in addition to the original constraints of the Monitor Model, i.e., learner's personality and age, and the focus of the task. They are also more willing to admit that children, too, might have access to the monitor. The basic assumption, however, about conscious knowledge being independent of the system built up by the organizer has been taken directly from the Monitor Model theory.

Having presented a general overview of the major theoretical issues in SLA, the authors proceed to discuss all the respective factors in more detail, summarizing the latest available research findings: their own experiments, as well as the relevant studies by Hatch, Larsen-Freeman, Asher, Ervin-Tripp, Hakuta, Postovsky, Swain, Wode, to mention only a few. A chapter is devoted to each of the following issues:

/i/ Effects of personality and age on pronunciation, grammar and rate of acquisition; it is worth noting that the authors do not see cerebral dominance as a barrier to adult language acquisition.

/ii/ The role of the first language: it is claimed that  $L_2$  learners do not automatically use  $L_1$  grammatical rules while attempting to produce  $L_2$  structures.

/iii/ Transitional constructions: striking similarities have been documented between systematic transitional constructions produced by  $L_1$  and  $L_2$  learners.

/iv/ Role of error analysis: the need for multidimensional error analysis is emphasized, as the existing explanatory frameworks are criticized as inadequate.

/v/ Acquisition order: "nearly every soundly designed study" has confirmed that such characteristic order exists, and it is the same for children and adults learning  $L_2$ .

Finally, the authors describe different experimental techniques and procedures used in SLA studies, i.e. research designs and elicitation tasks. They stress the lack of consensus on an overall index to determine stages of  $L_2$  development. The last chapter lists practical teaching guidelines and suggestions for classroom procedures, in keeping with the theoretical approach presented earlier.

The book contains an extensive glossary, an index of names, and an index of subjects. Each chapter is accompanied by a concise "Chapter Summary", and "Study Questions", which all add to the value of the book as a potentially ideal text - book for a course in SLA.

There still remains, obviously, a lot of confusion surrounding the processes of language acquisition. "Language Two" does not clarify much of this confusion, but neither does it endeavour to. It is an excellent "state-of-the-art" report on SLA research, and it testifies to general rapid progress in this field, resulting from both interdisciplinary approach, and more sophisticated treatment of research data. What is extremely important - in view of the recent findings - is that by stressing the centrality of the learner in the process of  $L_2$  acquisition Lulay, Burt and Krashen offer a realistic possibility to make  $L_2$  teaching more truly learner-oriented.

<sup>1</sup> The authors use the terms "acquisition" and "learning" interchangeably; whenever it is important to stress the conscious or subconscious nature of the process, the terms "conscious" and "subconscious" are added, respectively. "Second language" /L<sub>2</sub>/ is defined as a language learned after the basic system of the first language /L<sub>1</sub>/ has been acquired, regardless of the context in which the process takes place /foreign language or host language environment/.

#### REFERENCES

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