

REVIEWS

Burt, Marina, Dulay, Heidi and Krashen, Stephen, *Language Two*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, xv + 315 pp.

There has not been anything much in the way of introductory textbooks to the field of second language acquisition, at least for the last five years. This book is intended to fill that gap. It is written in a style broadly suitable to the non-specialist: the overall presentation is attractive and it contains study questions at the end of most chapters; the chapters themselves are broken down into digestible sub-sections; the variety and type of print used helps to offset the potential alarm created in the unsophisticated reader faced with tables of data and graphs. The chapter division is organised as follows: Overview—The language environment—Internal processing—Effects of personality and age—Role of the first language—Transitional constructions—Errors—Acquisition order—Special constructions—Aspects of research methodology—From research to reality: implications for the teacher.

The appendices contain a section on computing rank order correlations and a glossary of terms. This is followed by a bibliography, an index of names and an index of subjects. In other words it has most of the things needed for someone giving a course in second language acquisition for relative beginners.

It has to be said that, despite the general nature of the chapter headings, the book hardly gives a comprehensive view of second language acquisition research to date. This fact alone need not be seen as indicating a crucial flaw since a biased book may gain in coherence and internal consistency, two important characteristics for an introductory textbook.

The overview chapter gives a summary of the book's contents with simple statements of the basic ideas and a highly simplified model of second language acquisition. The reader is told, for example, that interference plays very little part in learning a second language (except where pronunciation is concerned) and there is a homily about the benefits of being bilingual clearly aimed at readers who have the doubtful privilege of being native-speakers of a world language. In short, the idea is to unsettle preconceived notions about second language learning. Those readers who are familiar with Krashen's views will be interested to note that the terms 'learning' and 'acquisition' are used interchangeably and the distinction they used to signal is now reflected in the dichotomy between *conscious* and *unconscious* learning: this is a welcome improvement in terminology.

The chapter on the language environment extols the effects of natural exposure to language used for communication. Audio-lingual drills and translation are dismissed as teaching techniques because they focus the learner's attention on form and not on meaning and communication. One might note in passing that the behaviourist rationale behind

drills was not to focus the learner on form: in fact they were not supposed to focus on anything. The speedy response required precludes any conscious attention, the idea being to develop automatic, 'subconscious' habits. So-called meaning drills, where some focus (on meaning) is necessary, are not touched upon. As regards translation, it is hard to imagine this activity *not* involving considerations of meaning and communication although admittedly not in the subconscious way intended by the authors. There is actually a good case for incorporating the first technique, i.e. structural drills, into an approach based on the creative construction view advocated by the authors, despite what they say. The only proviso is that learners should have developed subconscious *knowledge* of the relevant structure first although not yet possess full *control* over it, i.e. the structure is known but not automatised. Drills would then be used not for acquisition but to develop control. However, since acquisition is a conglomerate of 'knowing' and (production and recognition) 'skill', this possibility is not considered in the book, which is a pity.

The language processing chapter elaborates on the model presented in the introduction. This model consists of the Filter and the Organiser—the unconscious components—and the Monitor—the conscious component. Although these components provide a convenient framework for presenting relevant factors in acquisition as revealed to date, they (perhaps inevitably, at this stage of the game) turn out to be hotchpotches of quite different things. The Monitor is a case in point. It involves *rule-learning*, that is the conscious memorisation of linguistic formulae, *drill behaviour* and *dialogue memorisation*. The problem of linking drill behaviour with consciousness was touched upon above; the problem of memorising dialogues as a Monitor-based activity consists in the fact that memorising conversations hardly involves rules, and the essential function of the Monitor, once it is present in the learner, is to consciously edit what is thrown up by the current, intuitively acquired rule system, i.e. subconscious knowledge. It is hard to see how learning dialogues by heart develops the editing ability of the learner to consciously and systematically improve on the deviant output of his or her intuitive knowledge of the target language. Finally, some readers may have difficulty in accepting the characterisation of learning difficulty and linguistic difficulty in this chapter. The essential point here is well taken: they are not the same. However, a morpheme count and/or a count of transformations are only one of many ways to establish linguistic complexity and not necessarily the best ways. Taken together they might constitute a rough-and-ready means but counting transformations is somewhat outdated in current models of generative grammar since the move is to drastically reduce the number and importance of transformations. Then again, learning complexity as a combination of experienced difficulty and length of learning period only works (a) if it is known when the learner actually began to learn the rule in question and (b) if no account is taken of the know/control distinction mentioned above: learners may recognise errors but still make them due to lack of fluency. The first point (a) is implicitly made later in the book (201).

Chapter 4 comprises a useful account of how personality may be related to acquisitional success. The authors make an informative observation about the speed with which older (versus younger) children start acquiring the target system. Older children are better conversation managers and create more 'comprehensible input' for themselves. The point could be made even more strongly by pointing to the fact that the more simplified speech received by the younger children may not be a compensatory factor: simplification may

lead to better comprehensibility but also to structural impoverishment, thus depriving the learner of useful structural information about the language. This at least is the current view of the role of 'motherese'. * Older learners not only get more comprehensible input, they get more informative (structurally richer) input, which is something different.

Chapter 5 deals with the role of the mother tongue. Although the L1 is presented in a better light than before (by the individual authors) it is still not implicated in the creation of new linguistic systems in the learner. The nasty side of transfer, i.e. unwanted negative transfer (interference) only comes into its own where pronunciation is concerned. We are given the amazingly specific figure of 28% as a ceiling on other types of interference (or 5% for younger learners) and are provided with evidence for the comparative rarity of interference errors in research data. Little or no discussion emerges on what they call cognitive transfer, which might have led to a more balanced picture of current research concerns. However, there is a good introduction to borrowing and code-switching. In other words, this chapter confirms the general impression that the book is not an introduction to second language acquisition so much as an introduction to one theoretical stance within that field of study.

Chapter 6 deals with transitional constructions. There is no discussion of the term 'inter-language' (although it is in the glossary at the back). This seems to be because the authors view acquisition in terms of a continuum or continua rather than a series of plateaus. The next chapter deals, somewhat confusingly, with 'errors' but if the reader consults the glossary, he or she will find that the category *error* is a broad one and includes not only developmental constructions but other, performance slips occasioned for example by L1 interference.

Again, no data is taken from research into transfer. Apart from that, this is nonetheless a good informative presentation of what learners do *en route* to target proficiency. It might have been followed by the chapter on 'special constructions' (routines and patterns) but a chapter on acquisition orders intervenes which, like the particular choice of the Spearman and Kendall (W) tests in a five page appendix, serves to reinforce the creative construction view of natural orders versus that which stresses individual variation.

The chapter entitled 'From Research to Reality' should be of particular interest to teachers and applied linguists and could usefully have been expanded not in the scope of its claims, which is fairly modest, but in terms of illustration and study questions (of which there are none). Arguably this subject will attract just as much interest as the one on research methods. Finally, the validity of some exotic methods (relaxing to baroque music, etc.) goes unquestioned. This may spark off a not unwarranted incredulity in some readers, or, alternatively, an unquestioning acceptance, also unwarranted.

There are two references (Padilla and Lindholm 1976; Padilla 1980) which are not in the bibliography. The glossary is useful and should provide an extra source for testing where the book is used for a course.

*Cf. Catherine Snow and Charles A. Ferguson's *Talking to Children*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1977) and Detlef Ufert's (1978) review of this book in *System* 6: 194-198. [Review Editor's note.]

Despite the fact that this is in no sense an unbiased, comprehensive treatment, it is nevertheless a welcome addition—from a pedagogical point of view—to this rapidly expanding area of research.

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Jones, Ken, *Simulations in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, vi + 122 pp., £3.50.

The use of simulation for FLL has grown steadily in the last few years, particularly with the advent of 'communicative methodology'. However, many communicative activities used in FLL and dubbed with the label 'simulation' or 'role-play' bear no more than a passing resemblance to 'proper' (non-FLL-designed) simulations. Jones' book is therefore welcome on at least four accounts. It is the first one that addresses (at any length) the use of simulation in FLL; it deals with 'proper' simulation; it is written for first-time users—for teachers starting to use the technique; and it is well organized on a chapter-to-chapter basis. The chapters are: 1. Why use simulations?, 2. Choosing simulations for the language classroom, 3. Preparing for the simulation, 4. The simulation in action, 5. The follow-up, 6. Will the simulation work?, 7. Assessing the result, 8. Simulations in teacher training. A ready-to-use simulation is included in Appendix A, and a summary of the book's main points is given in Appendix B. Rather than describe each chapter, I shall simply pick out some of the weak points in the book, in no particular order.

Simulation is defined as "reality of function in a simulated and structured environment" (5). This merely begs the question: 'what is a simulated environment?' Jones points out that his definition differs from most others, and so he should have given some others, even if he disagrees with them. It is welcome to have a writer on simulation who stresses the essential 'reality' of a simulation, but it would have been useful to have had a more 'academic' discussion (13–15) on this key concept (drawing for example on: Berger and Luckmann 1966; Greenblat and Gagnon 1979). The idea of 'function' comes as one in a set of terms: the functions, duties, responsibilities and powers of the participants; and these crop up relentlessly throughout the book rather like an *idée-fixe*. One result of this is that ambiguity arises in the use of the term 'function'. Jones says that "'function' refers to appropriate behaviour" (42), but does this include language behaviour? The other meaning, more common to L2 teachers, is language function (in the Munby/van Ek sense); and there are instances where it becomes difficult to determine what exactly is meant by the term, e.g. "the action has the language of functional interaction" (8).