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Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-01089-5 - Introducing Second Language Acquisition: Second Edition
Muriel Saville-Troike
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Introducing Second Language Acquisition

Written for students encountering the topic for the first time, this is a clear and practical introduction to second language acquisition (SLA). Using non-technical language, it explains how a second language is acquired; what the learner of a second language needs to know; and why some learners are more successful than others. This new edition of Muriel Saville-Troike's bestselling textbook introduces in a step-by-step fashion a range of fundamental concepts, such as SLA in adults and children, in formal and informal learning contexts, and in diverse socio-cultural settings. Taking an interdisciplinary approach, it encourages students to consider SLA from linguistic, psychological, and social perspectives. Providing a solid foundation in SLA, this book has become the leading introduction to the field for students of linguistics, psychology, education, and trainee language teachers.

MURIEL SAVILLE-TROIKE is Professor Emerita from the University of Arizona, named Regents' Professor of English before her retirement. She has made significant contributions to the fields of sociolinguistics and applied linguistics, and has previously held posts at Texas A & M University, the University of Texas, Georgetown University, and the University of Illinois. Her previous publications include *The Ethnography of Communication: An Introduction* (Third Edition, 2003).

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SECOND EDITION

MURIEL SAVILLE-TROIKE

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107648234

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First published 2006
8th printing 2010
Second edition 2012
3rd printing 2015

Printed in the United Kingdom by Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data
Saville-Troike, Muriel, 1936–
Introducing second language acquisition / Muriel Saville-Troike. – 2nd ed.
p. cm. – (Cambridge introductions to language and linguistics)
ISBN 978-1-107-01089-5 (hardback)
1. Second language acquisition. I. Title.
P118.2.S28 2012
418.0071 – dc23 2012002648

ISBN 978-1-107-01089-5 Hardback
ISBN 978-1-107-64823-4 Paperback

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About the book

This book is a brief but comprehensive introduction to the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). The intended audience is primarily undergraduate students, but it is also suitable for graduate students who have little or no prior knowledge of linguistics.

My goals in writing this book are threefold: (1) to provide a basic level of knowledge about second language learning phenomena to students as part of their general education in humanities, the social sciences, and education; (2) to stimulate interest in second language learning and provide guidance for further reading and study; and (3) to offer practical help to second language learners and future teachers.

Scope and perspective

I have included a broader range of SLA phenomena in this book than is the usual case: those involved in both adult and child second language learning, in both formal (instructed) and informal (natural) contexts of learning, and in diverse sociocultural settings. Since my own professional identity and commitment are interdisciplinary, I emphasize the importance of integrating linguistic, psychological, and social perspectives on SLA even as I recognize the differential nature of their assumptions and contributions. An effort has been made to maintain balance among them in quantity and quality of representation.

The focus of this book is on the acquisition of second language "competence," but this construct is broadly considered from different points of view: as "linguistic competence" (in the sense of underlying grammatical knowledge); as "communicative competence" (adding notions of requisite cultural knowledge and other knowledge which enables appropriate usage); and as knowledge required for participation in communicative activities involving reading, listening, writing, and speaking.

Design

Each chapter of this book considers three basic questions: *What* exactly does the L2 learner come to know? *How* does the learner acquire this knowledge? *Why* are some learners more successful than others? Chapter 1 introduces the most basic terms and concepts, beginning with "What is SLA?" Chapter 2 provides a foundational background, ranging from the nature and distribution of multilingualism in the world to generally accepted notions of contrasts between first and second language acquisition. The chapter concludes with a preview of the different theoretical frameworks of SLA which will be surveyed. Chapters 3 to 5 focus in turn on different disciplinary perspectives: linguistic, psychological, and social. Chapter 6 focuses on the competence required for academic and interpersonal functions, and on the interdependence of content, context, and linguistic knowledge. The final chapter briefly summarizes and integrates answers to the basic *what*, *how*, and *why* questions that are posed throughout the book.

Each chapter includes a preview of its content and a summary. Chapters 1 to 6 conclude with suggested activities for self-checking of understanding and for class discussion or individual exploration. Chapters 2 to 6 include annotated suggestions for further reading on each major topic in that chapter, listed in the order in which they occur. Important technical concepts are presented sequentially with key terms listed at the beginning of chapters and highlighted with explanations and examples in the text. A comprehensive glossary is provided for student reference, and the subject index allows for integration and reinforcement of concepts across topics and disciplinary perspectives. All terms which appear in the glossary are highlighted in the text, whether or not they are listed as key terms.

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Second edition changes

The same scope, perspective, and design are retained in the second edition of this book. The major change has involved updating its content and reference beyond 2005, when I submitted my manuscript for the first edition to Cambridge University Press.

While I have considered all recent publications on topics that I had already included in the first edition, I focused on adding information on the one new perspective within each discipline (linguistic, psychological, social) that I believe is most likely to be contributing significantly to SLA scholarship and practice in the early twenty-first century. For linguistics (Chapter 3) I added linguistic interfaces, which is of increasing interest and importance within the Chomsky tradition. For psychology (Chapter 4) I added Complexity Theory, which is changing ways that we pose critical questions and seek answers. And for social approaches, I added Computer Mediated Communication, primarily for the ways it is redefining our concept of "speech community" and influencing instructional practices.

Other changes have been made primarily to revise or clarify content in response to suggestions and comments from readers in different parts of the world. I greatly appreciate the dialogue we have been having since publication of the first edition, and I sincerely hope that it will continue.

Website

Additional resources to accompany this text are available for download at the book's website. These resources include all matter from the ends of chapters (questions for self-study, active learning and introductory suggestions for further reading), and the answer key to the questions for self-study. There are also additional teaching aids and professional resources that are not found in the textbook itself. For teaching, a new section called "More active learning" provides additional thought questions for each chapter to encourage critical thinking. These questions can be used as topics for student essays, class debates, or even, in some cases, mini-research projects. To supplement the textbook for use with advanced students, there is an annotated list, "Primary suggestions for further reading", made up of articles reporting original research in the field (updated to reflect the additions of the second edition). Finally, for students and instructors interested in the profession, there are current listings of professional organizations, journals, and institutes for research and development.

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Acknowledgments

Any introductory survey of a field is indebted to many sources, and this is no exception (as the relatively long list of references suggests). I am particularly grateful to Karen Barto-Sisamout in the preparation of this work: she developed the suggestions for further reading and chapter activities, and she is responsible for the development and maintenance of the accompanying Website. She has also contributed significantly to other aspects of conceptualization and development. I am also very grateful to colleagues and other readers (especially Rudy Troike) who have made suggestions, corrections, and comments, and to Nadia Moraglio for her careful and competent proofreading. My students and former students at the University of Arizona have been most helpful in providing relevant examples and in indicating where clarification in my presentation was necessary. I could not begin to make an enumeration, but I thank them all.

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