

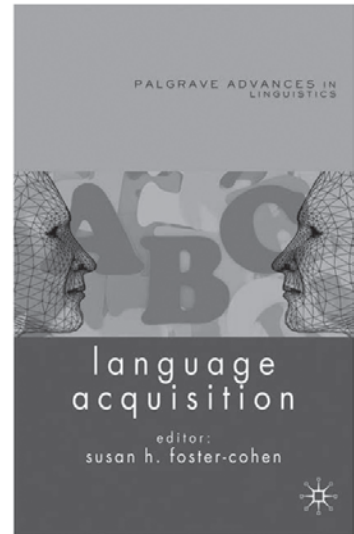
Language acquisition. Foster-Cohen, S. (Ed.) (2009). London: Palgrave MacMillan. pp 338.

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Language acquisition implicates the process of learning a language in a very natural way; it is the way that we all acquired our mother tongue when we were babies or in the case of bilingual or trilingual people, our two or three mother tongues. That's the reason why it has been, it is and it will be the focus of lots of research. Trying to understand and crack the way we acquire language would be a huge success for all people interested in learning a second or another foreign language all over the world, because it is a way in which people can learn a second language without effort and in a durable way. This book is the result of the hard work of language acquisition professionals. It consists of the thoughts and theories of researchers that study language acquisition and they examine it through different approaches: the 'observational' and the 'logical'. The book consists of the «Contents» followed by a «Series preface», a «Preface», the «Acknowledgements», a «list of Tables and Figures», the «Contributors», and an «Introduction», that is the start of the three parts in which the book's chapters are divided. Part I is called «Explaining language acquisition» and contains five chapters; Part II «Windows on language acquisition» consists of four chapters and Part III «Language acquisition, culture and linguistic diversity» contains the last four chapters. Finally, the book is closed by an «Index».

More precisely, the first part of the book, called 'Explaining language acquisition' that contains five chapters as previously mentioned, provides an overview of current thinking about language acquisition. The first chapter entitled 'Word learning and the origins of phonological systems', by Marilyn Vihman, is about the process from babies' babbling to their first words. In the second chapter, 'Cracking the language code: processing strategies in first language acquisition', the author Ann M. Peters introduces the ways and strategies that children use to crack the linguistic code and then, to acquire the language. The third chapter, 'The inevitability of child direct speech', by Matthew Saxton, tries to prove with an exhaustive study that Chomsky was wrong when he established that child direct speech (CDS) was a mass of false starts. In the fourth chapter, 'Universal grammar approaches to language acquisition', Maria Teresa Guasti, shows that we acquire language because it is a part of our nature and is what makes us humans. She also explains the way children acquire language. The fifth chapter, 'Second language acquisition', by Susan Gass, attempts to show us the situation of current language acquisition (SLA) research: its scope and a comparison between other fields like linguistics.

The second part of the book, 'Windows on language acquisition' contains four chapters. Its first chapter (chapter 6 in the book), 'Language and the many faces of emotion', by Judy



S. Reilly, shows the importance of emotional cues in our communication, such as intonation, voice quality or facial expression. The study ranges from the emotion in infancy (first words) to communication and to grammar (first signs to syntax) and from grammar to narrative and finally, to the lexical evaluation in narratives of children with Williams Syndrome (thinking that sociability has a genetic basis). Similarly, Jill G. de Villiers and Peter A. de Villiers, in the seventh chapter 'Complements enable representation of the contents of false beliefs: the evolution of a theory of theory of mind', review the theory that they proposed in 1995 that certain aspects of grammatical development may be necessary for children to achieve understanding of the propositional attitudes, specifically the false beliefs of others. Because once children have their own grammatical machinery, they may have a range of important understandings of both their own and other people's mental states, but the explicit understanding of the content of false beliefs is not possible. It is a study about the relationships between theory of mind and language development. The eighth chapter called 'Going beyond semantics: the development of pragmatic enrichment', by Nausicaa Pouscoulous and Ira A. Noveck, shows some of the complexities of language (like scalar expressions) like conjunctions or logical terms such as *some*, *or* and *might*, through experiments with students. The ninth chapter 'The acquisition of phrasal vocabulary', by Koenraad Kuiper, Georgie Columbus and Norbert Schmitt, shows how and when learners acquire phrasal vocabulary learning.

The third part of the book is called 'Language acquisition, culture and linguistic diversity' and contains the last four chapters. This part of the book focuses on the importance and the determination of the culture and tradition of languages. Chapter 10 called 'Language development in simultaneous bilingual children', by Natascha Müller, is the first chapter of this third part. It is a study of bilingual first language acquisition (of German and Romance languages: Italian and French), i.e. children who are exposed to two languages from birth, where this bilingual first language acquisition is a simultaneous process. The eleventh chapter 'Universals and cross-linguistic variability in children's discourse', by Maya Hickman, focuses on discourse cohesion in children's language, so it ranges from entities to time and space in discourse, across languages and across child languages. Chapter 12 'Trends in research on narrative development', by Ruth A. Berman, also focuses on narrative, mainly on the ways and the process of the development of the narrative production in childhood to adolescence and adulthood. The last chapter of part III and of the book is chapter 13 entitled 'Family literacy activities: what is, what ought to be and the role of parents' ideas' by Stuart McNaughton, Meaola Amituanai-Toloa and 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki. This chapter focuses on the changes of family literacy practices and of parents' ideas, and examines the cases of Tongan and Samoan communities.

This book is a good guide that aids understanding of the process of language acquisition. One of the best points of this book is that the information is contrasted. The different points of view in which all chapters are written give the readers a deeper and wider knowledge of this issue. It is highly recommended for all audiences and mainly, for people interested and/or professionals of (second/foreign) language acquisition. This book shows us tips for a faster and better learning of another language and it helps us to understand the big mystery of the human nature in which we all acquire our mother tongue, the way that babies start to communicate with their parents and the way that first babblings turn into first words. Everyone will enjoy reading this book, because it talks about a process that has been a part of our own lives and of our children's lives, that's why this book is recommended not only for linguistics or language teachers/researchers, but for all audiences.