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***Input, Interaction, and the Second Language Learner.
Susan M. Gass. Routledge, New York (2018).189 pp.,
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The 2018 edition of 'Input, Interaction, and the Second Language Learner', along with a new preface, explores the roles of input and interaction in second language development and introduces the research studies that have shaped SLA from twenty years ago until now. It refers to diverse theories and surveys the stages that input go through before it can be used productively by language learners. Gass proposes input-interaction model that embraces diverse models in the literature and asserts that all models complement, rather than contradict, each other.


Following the preface, the book is divided into seven chapters which address the roles of input, interaction, and attention in second language development. To clarify their roles in SLA the author refers to both experimental and theoretical studies and discusses them within the continuum of traditional and modern models tackling them historically and comparatively from different perspectives including their roles within the structural and task-based approaches.

In chapter one, "Modeling Second Acquisition", Gass argues how input is conceived in Krashen's model and UG framework. Then she moves toward the SLA framework which is accounted for the transformation of input into L2 output through intermediate stages (apperception, comprehended input, intake, integration, and output). And she argues that the processes in the intermediate stages are influenced by attention, awareness, and consciousness. Also, movement from one stage to another is affected by mediating factors which makes trajectory of the system development complex and dynamic.

Chapter two, "The Question of Evidence", starts with the discussion of evidence, in the forms of nature or nurture, required for the learners to construct or revise their linguistic knowledge.

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Nature claims that children are innately equipped with abstract principles of UG which enable them to internalize a complex grammar within a short period of time, but nurture emphasizes environment and interactions. Following these general bits of evidence the author focuses on the specific kinds of evidences comprising positive, negative, and indirect negative evidence conducive to the development of a language system. Then Gass refers to the competition model and asserts that communicative functions constrain and govern the forms of natural languages.

In chapter three, "The Nature and Function of Input", Gass argues that the nature of input varies across cultures and the function of input can be influenced by the environmental factors. To address responses to children's utterances by adults the author refers to three studies. First, approval or disapproval of child's utterance is done on the semantic usefulness rather than the syntactic well-formedness. Second, utterances addressed to the children are more ill-formed utterances than well-formed ones. Third, repetitions of children's utterances may act as feedback; something is wrong with the utterances.

In the next section Gass refers to simplification of input in SL and mentions similarities between learners' language and foreigners' talk. Foreigner talk is not monolithic, may be influenced by individual and contextual factors and is characterized by simplification in nearly all aspects of grammar. The author then compares understanding of modified input versus unmodified input and states that, especially interactionally modified input leads to subsequently better linguistic production. Also, she represents Krashen's monitor model and makes a distinction between Krashen's comprehensible input and Gass' comprehended input and accentuates the role of negative evidence, direct and indirect, which is absent in Krashen's model.

Chapter four, "Input and SLA Theories", is devoted to the type and amount of input in the development of language in 'input-interaction perspective', 'the input hypothesis', 'universal grammar', and 'an information processing perspective'. In the first model Gass backs input and interaction interface as the primary factor for the development of language system. In the second model Krashen emphasizes comprehensible input. To conceptualize the relation between input and UG within UG model, the author refers to White (1996b) and raises four positions, leaving the answer to the accessibility of input to adult second language learners to further research. And information processing model, like competition model, is psycholinguistic in nature and comprises automatic and controlled processing. To automatize controlled knowledge input and attentional demands are crucial and serve the function of restructuring of the structures.

Chapter five, "The Role of Interaction" focuses on the role of interaction and miscommunication where the author asserts that the latter can be helpful for language development as it leads to the negotiation of form and meaning to avoid miscommunication. To clarify the author presents the model of negotiation of meaning comprising a trigger and a resolution with indicators and responses between them. In negotiated interaction, individuals become cognizant of indicators of problems and cooperate to avoid a failure in communication.

Then the author discusses corrective feedback (indirect and direct) or negative evidence from theoretical as well as empirical perspectives. Negotiated interaction and feedback may be influenced by factors comprising task type (problem-solving vs. debate, one-way vs. two-way

tasks, and required information exchange vs. optional information exchange) which in turn is mediated by the presence of teacher and participation pattern type as group conditions. Also, background knowledge and status differences (nativeness vs. non-nativeness) determine to some extent the amount of negotiation and may be mediated by the amount of knowledge that learners have about the subject matter. The third factor is the interpersonal variable including familiarity among pairs. The last factor is to do with gender with the implication that the same gender dyads are more involved in negotiation than the mixed gender dyads. In a nutshell, Gass argues that a gap in background knowledge (linguistic or content) provides more opportunities for the negotiation of meaning and form, as a facilitator of learning, which in turn may be influenced by personal and interpersonal features.

In chapter six, "Comprehension, Output, and the Creation of Learner Systems", Gass focuses on the creation of language systems in learners and distinguishes between semantic and syntactic comprehension. Comprehension deals with the form-meaning relations and involves input processing which is important in converting input into intake. The author asserts that semantic comprehension is a prerequisite to syntactic comprehension which in turn is a prerequisite to acquisition. Another dimension of comprehension is intake which comprises psycholinguistic processing and takes learners from input to their interlanguage grammars; as such information is assimilated into the learners' language system.

Output, the productive use of language, complements comprehension and pushes learners from semantic processing to syntactic processing and makes it possible to convey the message precisely, coherently, and appropriately. It helps to verbalize the problem and may serve as a means of hypothesis testing, feedback, and negative evidence.

The final chapter, " Epilogue: Classroom Implications and Applications", provides readers with critical understanding of learners in the classrooms and the relevance of the text to teaching methodologies - Gass sketches a view of language teaching which is consistent with the concepts discussed in the book; and to put concepts and conditions discussed in the text into practice, she refers to tasks in which aspects of language teaching comprising syllabus design and methodology , hitherto separate, are united.

The classic text is the revised version of the original text published in 1997, with a new preface in the form of dialogues between Gass and A. Mackey, R. Ellis, and M. Long on the importance of the topic two decades later. The preface covers key issues of interaction, as well as the named scholars' interest in the field, and the future of interaction, the relationship between interactionist research and TBLT research, and future directions to the interaction research highlighting how interaction and input lead to the development of language system and subsequently to the acquisition of language. This is a further positive aspect of this edition which provides a unique overview of developments in the field and gives useful insights about the future of the profession. The book further provides a great discussion of the acquisition literature. Also, attached to each chapter is a note section which enriches explanation and refers readers to further studies.

The book addresses researchers interested in acquisitional and pedagogical aspects of second language learning and claims to be useful for the audiences new to the field. It should be asserted that this claim cannot be embraced as the book refers readers to overview of the literature covered superficially which requires background knowledge as well as expertise to grasp. Another weak point widespread in the book is reference to many studies without providing comparison or connection among them all of which burdens coherence and understanding of the study and confuses readers to digest. And to make the book richer and more usable for those new to the field, adding a glossary section is recommended.

References

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