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English in Indian Bilingualism

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ENGLISH IN INDIAN BILINGUALISM. *Kamal K. Sridhar.* New Delhi: Manohar Publications, 1989. Pp. xix + 177.

It has been estimated that more than half of about 750 million people who speak English all over the world speak it as a second/foreign language. The English they speak, which has come to be known as Indigenized Varieties of English (IVE), refers not to a monolithic linguistic system but rather to an assorted group of many Englishes (like Indian English, Nigerian English, Singapore English, etc.). Even though a large body of knowledge is available on their variations and functions (see the volumes edited by Kachru, 1982; Pride, 1982; Quirk & Widdowson, 1985; and Smith, 1983, to cite just a few), IVE remains a neglected scene as far as developing a second language acquisition (SLA) model is concerned. That is, none of the major theories of SLA has attempted, in any serious way, to address and account for the processes and strategies governing the acquisition of IVE. Reasons are not far to seek. As Davies (1989) indicated, connecting the concept of interlanguage and IVE requires an understanding of several not-so-easily-definable factors. Secondly, not much systematic work has been done on factors influencing IVE acquisition. Kamal Sridhar's book addresses both these concerns admirably well.

The basic thesis of this book is that the acquisition, use, and forms of English in India are best understood in the context of the organic and interdependent relationship between English and the Indian languages. Sridhar delineates her thesis by examining several topics including sociolinguistic issues concerning Indian bilingualism, psycholinguistic aspects of acquiring an IVE, cognitive factors of SLA strategies, and pragmatic (speech act) features of Indian English. She makes several insightful observations, and I shall highlight some of them here.

In explicating the role of English in India, Sridhar proposes a very sensible theory. Her "organic theory" of bilingualism treats English in India not as an "additional" language but as one having a complementing, overlapping, mutually sustaining symbiotic relationship with the Indian languages. Further, she shows the primacy of English in the Indian educational scene and makes an insightful observation: "in a multilingual democracy, language policies in education evolve in the direction of languages lower on the prestige hierarchy annexing more and more valued roles in the educational system by weakening the exclusive rights of the prestige languages" (p. 34).

Sridhar also shows how code-mixing in Indian bilingualism involves simultaneous interaction of the two linguistic systems in the production of a single sentence and offers an interesting hypothesis on the status of mixed elements as units in sentence production. Her hypothesis is that the message underlying a sentence is put together in chunks of various sizes or degrees of complexity, each chunk functioning as a unit at a particular level. Transition from one language to another could occur between chunks.

In the context of psycholinguistic aspects of IVE learning, Sridhar provides evidence that casts doubts on some of our beliefs in SLA theories. For instance, she found that "the integrative motivation need not necessarily involve identification with the native speakers of the target language and a desire to be accepted as a member of that group" (p. 49). She also questions the application of the term *interlanguage* to IVE's, suggesting that the acquisitional target for IVE speakers is not the native norm but an indigenized one. Asserting that "SLA theory has been counter-intuitive and limited in explanatory power with regard to a very substantial segment of second language learner population" (p. 64), she emphasizes the need to reevaluate the applicability of "mainstream" SLA theories to the particular circumstances in which IVE's are acquired. In this context, she shows how Ausubel's theory of assimilation, which includes various types of learning, could be profitably used to account for SLA.

The book contains many thought-provoking ideas such as the ones highlighted earlier. How-

ever, one feels that these ideas have not been adequately put together to offer a comprehensive, coherent framework of English language acquisition in the Indian bilingual context. This may be because the book is a collection of "slightly revised and edited versions" of papers published over the last few years. If there had been more than a "slight" revision, perhaps the book could have enjoyed greater coherence, and, on a lighter note, the reader would not have been misled into thinking that Seliger's paper on "Strategy and tactic in second language acquisition" is yet to appear (p. 167)!

Such minor flaws notwithstanding, this well-documented work succinctly brings out the complexity that characterizes Indian bilingualism, provides thought-provoking ideas that challenge current perspectives of SLA, and contributes significantly to a more insightful understanding of bilingualism in general and of Indian bilingualism in particular.

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MAKING IT HAPPEN: INTERACTION IN THE SECOND LANGUAGE CLASSROOM: FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE. Patricia A. Richard-Amato. New York: Longman, 1988. Pp. 426.

Making it Happen, a practical guide to establishing communicatively oriented second language (SL) classrooms, is organized into five parts: I. A Theoretical Perspective, II. Exploring Methods and Activities, III. Some Practical Issues, IV. Programs in Action, and V. Related Reading. Several assumptions, explicitly held by the author, provide the theoretical basis for discussion and pedagogical activities offered: (1) providing comprehensible, interesting, relevant, unsequenced, and sufficient input is the goal of SL instruction; (2) interaction is essential to SLA; and (3) affective factors (especially motivation and anxiety) are significant in second language acquisition (SLA). These theoretical foundations are established through chapters in Part I and in reprinted readings in Part V (e.g., Ellis, Krashen, Vygotsky, H. D. Brown, Oller, and Cummins). Throughout the text, Richard-Amato also relies heavily on *The Natural Approach* (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

Though Richard-Amato intends *Making it Happen* for "teachers developing programs tailored to the needs and interests of their students" (p. xiv), perhaps the most appropriate audience for this book is the brand-new teacher-in-training first encountering issues of SLA and SL pedagogy. Advocating "a low-anxiety, interactional [classroom] in which communication is emphasized" (p. xiii), Part II admirably addresses the inevitable question from novice teachers of what to do on Monday.

More experienced teachers will no doubt be familiar with the eclectic approach taken, and SLA researchers will likely be annoyed by the author's uncritical, wholesale adaptation of