

**John T. Guthrie, Editor.**  
**ASPECTS OF READING ACQUISITION.**  
**Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1976.**  
**222 pp. \$3.95 (paper).**

*Aspects of Reading Acquisition* is a rich and vital collection of papers presented at the Fifth Annual Blumberg Symposium on research in Early Childhood Education, 1974. It includes an overview of the papers presented, seven papers, and a critical commentary on each of the presentations by Joanna Williams.

This book is unique in three respects: it suggests the need for models of reading acquisition; it represents a multi-disciplinary view toward what the important issues are in reading research; and it suggests the necessity of interdisciplinary theory exchange in order to develop adequate models of reading acquisition. It is not recommended as a book for the classroom teacher. However, it is highly recommended for scholars who have an interest in or are involved in reading research. Because of the variety of forward-looking issues raised, it could be used for advanced masters degree or doctoral seminars concerned with studying theories and models of reading or the prevention of reading failures.

Since the 1970's there has been considerable interest in basic research concerned with theories and models of reading behaviour. Samuel's paper outlines the differences between the subskills and the psycholinguistic models of reading behaviour. He then goes on to discuss the implications of these models for reading instruction. Benson pieces together pathological cases to develop a model of how reading occurs neurologically. And Kinesbourne proposes a model of reading acquisition based on visual processes, auditory processes, and cross-model association. The comparison of the models proposed in these papers offers a fascinating contrast in methodological approaches for the study of how reading is acquired. A comparison of these papers also suggests that how one goes about developing a model of reading behaviour is in part tied to the training and the language of specific disciplines. The latter point is both awesome and important if we consider Benjamin Whorf's observation that the scientist is restricted in his conception of phenomena by his language.

The papers by Entwistle, Menyuk, Satz, Friel and Rudegain are concerned with factors which must be considered in accounting for reading failures or contrasting good and poor readers. Entwistle explores the relationship between children who fail to learn to read and certain anomalies in their socio-personal development. Menyuk contrasts the differences between the acquisition of speech and reading and then applies the implications of this information to distinguishing between good and poor readers. Satz, Friel and Rudegain elaborate on the development and validation of measures to detect and forecast the child who is likely to be a reading failure. These papers offer considerable opportunity to delineate important qualifications to the more general models

of reading behaviour discussed by Samuels, Kinesbourne and Benson. In addition they offer a base for considering what critical relationships exist between the child's language, socio-personal development, and cognitive development as they apply to the acquisition of reading behaviour.

The seventh paper by Resnick and Beck is concerned with the design and management of reading instruction. This paper is unique because it represents the joint efforts of a cognitive psychologist and a reading specialist. Considering the total collection of papers, it is unfortunate that at least one other paper on the design of reading instruction could not have been included in the collection. Resnick is clearly in favour of a subskills approach to defining reading behaviour and therefore couches her approach to designing reading instruction within a subskills framework. The reader is advised to consider works by Kenneth Goodman (1975) or William Page (1975) in order to be informed of the equally important psycholinguistic approach.

A weakness in the book is the omission of a paper on child development as it relates to reading acquisition, which might have offered a broader theoretical base for reading acquisition as a developmental phenomenon. Again, the inclusion of short reactions to each paper by the other authors in the volume would have helped the reader to integrate the salient issues. Williams' critical commentary on each paper is most useful, but it lacks the vital interdisciplinary character unique to this collection of papers.

In short, *Aspects of Reading Acquisition* is a must for reading specialists, graduate students and professors who are interested in studying acquisition of reading from a multidisciplinary view.

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## REFERENCES

- Goodman, K.S. *Miscue Analysis: Applications to Reading Instruction*. N.C.T.E., 1973.
- Page, W.D. (Ed.) *Help For The Reading Teacher: New Directions in Research*. N.C.T.E., 1975.