

---

## BOOK REVIEW

---

### *A Practical Guide to Language Learning*

H. Douglas Brown. McGraw-Hill Publishing Company, U.S.A. 1989.

Reviewed by Pavinee Navarat

Chulalongkorn University Language Institute

*A Practical Guide to Language Learning* is primarily designed to provide students beginning a foreign language with a general guide to the language learning process. However, it is also highly recommended for language teachers since they can select strategies suggested here for incorporation into their language teaching. These strategies can complement any teaching method being used.

The book is divided into fifteen brief chapters which can form a semester-long program of strategies for learning in an introductory foreign language course. Each chapter summarizes research findings and changes them into practical exercises. In easy terms it emphasizes a major factor that learners need to consider in order to master the new language successfully such as setting up learning goals or adopting a cooperative learning style. The end of each chapter has exercises that will enrich the process of learning. They give useful suggestions on how to learn within and beyond the classroom.

Another strong point of this book is that it makes a variety of research on the psychology of language learning accessible to foreign language learners. For instance, chapter 7 addresses the two learning styles, extrovert and introvert. By answering a questionnaire in the exercise, readers will discover whether they have adopted the right learning style or not.

Chapter 9 deals with differences between left-and right-brain functioning. By completing the questionnaire on page 42-43, readers can

determine to what degree they are right-brain or left-brain oriented. This awareness will certainly help learners realize whether they need to change this since a successful language learner is balanced and makes use of both sides of the brain.

Chapter 12 deals with emotional problems that a learner might encounter in the class, such as embarrassment when making mistakes or a sense of fear of being laughed at by classmates. The writer describes how to get rid of these psychological factors in a very warm and encouraging way.

Practical tips for becoming fluent in the foreign language are given in chapters 13 and 14. They discuss the advantages of establishing or joining a language club and of mingling with native speakers of the foreign language one is learning to have empathy with and get to know their culture.

The final note in chapter 15 seems to capsuleize the writer's message to all language learners, that is, to take a light hearted and positive perspective on the language learning process by thinking of it as a game full of fun. A game where one can win.

Thus, this book represents a very important attitude in language learning. It is not only useful and practical for learners who strive for success but also interesting and enlightening reading for teachers who are looking for effective strategies for language teaching.

