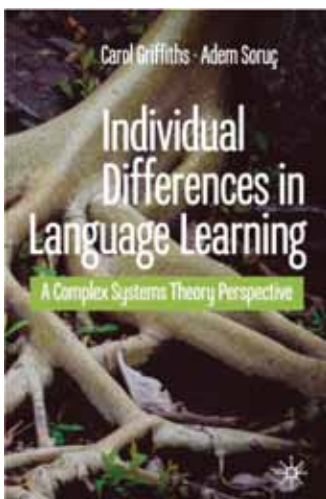


Individual Differences in Language Learning: A Complex Systems Theory Perspective. Carol Griffiths & Adem Soruç (2020). Palgrave Macmillan, 220 pages, ISBN 978-3-030-52900-0 (eBook).

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.30827/portalin.vi37.21254>



Individual differences are attached considerable importance in almost all components of the linguistic system, including the acquisition and processing of properties of speech, complex grammatical structures, and discourse (Kidd, Donnelly & Christiansen, 2018). Considering each individual as a unique language learner, exploring individual differences can provide language teachers with lots of opportunities concerning material adaptation, adopting appropriate strategies, adjusting their teaching style, and giving feedback in the language learning and teaching process. More specifically, there is a complex relationship among learner variables such as first language literacy, self-efficacy, gender, attainment, and so on (Courtney, Graham, Tonkyn & Marinis, 2017). *Individual Differences in Language Learning: A Complex Systems Theory Perspective* attempts to decipher this complex system adopting an evidence-based perspective in each significant individual difference presented in different sections. The book has been designed in a reader-friendly manner with eye-opener prompt questions at the very beginning and at the end, follow-up tasks, and a list for further reading which serves as a guide for researchers in each section.

The book starts with an introduction that focuses on the background of individual differences as a concept with references to studies pioneering in the field. The authors present a framework regarding the coverage of individual differences by providing the

rationale for the inclusion of the critical individual variables in the book. The section titled 'Age' starts with well-constructed prompt questions that enable readers to think before reading. Readers are highly recommended to pay special attention to the small-scale case study in which the language learning journey of *Olga* who is a Russian woman married to a Turkish husband is presented evidently (see pp. 20-21). In the section concerning sex/gender, the authors, having presented all related variables such as culture, aptitude, personality, style, strategies, autonomy, beliefs, affect and motivation through selected research findings, state that 'there is no reason to believe that both males and females cannot learn language equally well' (p. 40). The next section focusing on race, ethnicity, nationality and culture unravels the relationships among these concepts through presenting some important findings from both review and experimental studies. In the section, a small-scale case study reveals remarkable data regarding culture shock and its effects on the language learning process.

Aptitude, the fifth section of the book, is presented as a controversial concept in the book. The section mentions aptitude tests available in the literature first and explains the importance of working memory and neurolinguistics. The sixth section of the book deals with personality which is believed to play a significant role in language learning. The section starts focusing on personality tests and reviews well-known scales. Presenting some of the previous studies on language learning styles, the section titled 'Learning Style' introduces an action research study conducted in China providing some important details about the research process and findings. The section presents important implications based on the reviewed research findings. The case of Hiro, a 64-year-old Japanese man who decided to learn English, is highly interesting in terms of adapting teaching styles to learners' styles (see p. 106). The eighth section which deals with language learning strategies starts with introducing various definitions of language learning strategies. The authors offer their own definitions as a combination of what is reviewed in the literature, as well. Autonomy, which is the title of the ninth section of the book, is presented as a controversial concept that has a multidimensional aspect. The section explains the background of autonomy in language learning and displays some important previous studies including a study of the relationship between learner autonomy and language proficiency (see p. 134). The tenth section deals with how beliefs affect the language learning process. The section starts with the introduction of beliefs as a concept and then focuses on previous studies. Affect, as the title of the eleventh section, is also attached importance as one of the individual variables in the book. The section discusses different dimensions of Affect such as anxiety, attitudes, attribution, empathy, inhibition, self-concept, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and self-image. As the last individual variable, the twelfth section, motivation is defined at the beginning. The authors present theoretical framework and types of motivation, reviewing the current literature. The last section of the book explains and emphasizes the holistic view to individual differences suggesting that there complex interactions among all possible variations. Therefore, the authors included a study that investigates the relative importance of eleven individual differences specified in the book.

All in all, *Individual Differences in Language Learning: A Complex Systems Theory Perspective* serves as a handbook for researchers wishing to conduct research on individual differences in language learning with the theoretical framework and sample research studies

covered in each section. Furthermore, with the eye-opener questions presented at the beginning and end of each section the book can trigger further research and inspire academicians, practitioners, and post-graduate students in the field of language teaching.

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