

## Summary of Book Chapter, MLA Style (Ryoo)

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Ryoo 1

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### Summary of "You, the Language Learner"

According to Joan Rubin and Irene Thompson, a language learner's success or failure comes not from the outside but mostly from within the learner. People have different characteristics and different ways to acquire a language. Rubin and Thompson identify individual characteristics and ways for language learners to examine their own strengths and weaknesses. The authors report that the factors affecting success are age, aptitude, "psychological predispositions," and past experience (Rubin and Thompson 3-8).

First of all, Rubin and Thompson explain the advantages and disadvantages of the age of the language learner. Children can more easily get along with new friends who speak the new language than adults can, and also they show a greater ability to pick up an accurate accent of the foreign language. However, adults as language learners have many advantages over children. For example, adults can pay attention better, remember more, and keep track of a lot of different kinds of information at the same time (4). Rubin and Thompson claim that the important thing is for a language learner to realize the reason for learning the language. It is never too late to learn a language (5).

Second, Rubin and Thompson point out that psychological predispositions include attitude, personality, and learning style (5-8). They believe attitude and personality can make it easier or harder to learn a language. For example, they claim that "positive"

In the opening paragraph, Ryoo gives the names of the authors and the authors' main idea.

Third-person point of view and present tense are used in a summary.

Page references are included in parenthetical in-text citations. If a paper discusses only a single work, the authors' names are given in the first citation; in subsequent citations, only the page number or page range is needed.

Marginal annotations indicate **MLA-style formatting** and **effective writing**.

and “pragmatic” attitudes help people succeed in learning a language (6). And they discuss three personality traits, including “extroversion,” “inhibition,” and “tolerance of ambiguity.” Sociable people and people who have a tolerance of ambiguity are more likely to learn languages faster than those who do not, according to the authors (6-7). Rubin and Thompson classify learning style as rule learner or risk learner and eye-mindedness or ear-mindedness. Rule learners are more likely to learn a language by following structured rules. Risk learners learn by imitating native speakers or by making mistakes. Also, ear-minded learners learn more by hearing the language, and eye-minded learners learn more by reading (7-8).

Third, Rubin and Thompson explain that past experiences with language learning can have an effect on the learner. The authors report that people who have already learned several languages can more successfully master other foreign languages than those who have not (8). These may be the people the authors describe as having a natural tendency to learn languages easily; the authors call it “aptitude” (5). Some tests can measure aptitude, but they aren’t always accurate because they test how well a learner would perform in a language classroom setting but not necessarily in other situations.

In the chapter “You, the Language Learner,” Rubin and Thompson give tips for learning a foreign language. According to the authors, it is important for learners to understand what kind of learner they are and what strategies work for them (3). What also matters is a person’s willingness to keep trying even when the learning is frustrating. When people take the time to analyze their personality and attitude for language learning, they can be more successful learners.

Ryoo limits herself to presenting the text’s key points. She doesn’t offer her own thoughts or positions.

Most of the summary is in Ryoo’s own words. She quotes an occasional word or phrase from the original source.

Ryoo maintains a neutral, objective tone throughout the summary.

Work Cited

Rubin, Joan, and Irene Thompson. "You, the Language Learner."  
*How to Be a More Successful Language Learner*, 2nd ed.,  
Heinle, 1994, pp. 3-8.

The work cited page  
is in MLA style.