



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

Introducing
Second Language

Acquisition

第二语言习得入门

□ 王立非 编著



高等教育出版社
HIGHER EDUCATION PRESS

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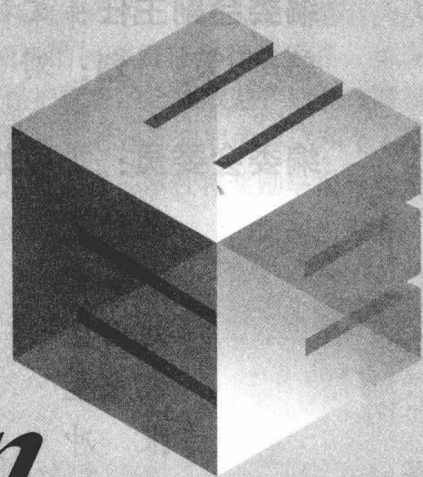
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总 序

随着全球化进程的加速发展，文化全球化和经济全球化的深入推进，高等教育，特别是英语专业教育在新的历史转型期的文化交融层面越来越肩负着举足轻重的社会责任。因此，为了培养具有扎实的英语基本功、相关的专业知识和文化知识、较强的英语综合应用能力和创新思维的人才，为不断深入的大学英语教学改革培养和提供师资，而且立足于中国语境，用全球化的理念和视角进行教材设计，我们策划了“高等院校英语专业立体化系列教材”。

实现这一具有时代意义的战略任务需要广大英语专业教师树立执着的敬业精神，制订科学的、高水平的、切合实际的英语专业教学大纲，编写出版能充分体现大纲要求的有关课程（必修和选修）的配套教材，以及开发为课堂教学和学生自主化学习服务的、与新型电子化教学仪器设备配套的教学软件系统。由高等教育出版社策划并陆续出版的“高等院校英语专业立体化系列教材”作为“普通高等教育‘十一五’国家级规划教材”，就是为实现英语专业教学改革这一历史任务服务的。

为实现以上目的和任务，本系列教材注重以下方面：

1. 注重培养学生的跨文化交际能力和文化鉴赏与批判能力。在教材设计时体现“全球视野，中国视角”的理念。这就是说，本系列教材在保持各门课程的思想性和批判性的优良传统外，既向学生提供西方文化背景知识，也引导学生鉴赏和学习我国的优秀文化传统。要让学生在多元文化的背景下，熟悉掌握中外文化的共同点和差异。在这个基础上，培养学生的鉴别和比较能力，启发和诱导学生进行创新思维。

2. 科学安排，系统设计。经过多年来对教学模式改革的探讨，我国英语专业教学已总结出良性的教学规律，一般将4年的教学过程分为两个阶段，即：基础阶段（一年级和二年级）和高年级阶段（三年级和四年级）。按照此教学规律，本系列教材分为基础阶段教材和高年级阶段教材，同时悉心设计基础阶段和高年级阶段的衔接。基础阶段教材的主要任务是传授英语基础知识，对学生进行全面的、严格的基本技能训练，培养学生实际运用语言的能力、良好的学风和正确的学习方法，为进入高年级学习打下扎实的专业基础。高年级阶段教材的主要任务是在继续打好语言基础的同时，学习英语专业知识和相关专业基础知识，进一步扩大知识面，增强对文化差异的敏感性，提高综合

运用英语进行交际的能力。同时,根据《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》的课程设置,本系列教材将课程分为英语专业技能课、英语专业知识课和相关专业知识课三种类型。全面培养学生的语言能力、思维能力、终生学习能力,拓宽学生的知识面,同时帮助学生树立正确的人生观和价值观。

3. 时代性。这不仅表现在选材方面能反映当代人民的生活内容,更主要的在于对它的“立体化”要求。21世纪的教材不再拘泥于传统的纸质教材,而是能培养学生多元识读能力(multiliteracy)的基于多媒体(multimedia)的多模态(multimodality)教材。本系列教材在建设传统纸质教材的同时启动建设一个开放性、超文本化的网络系列课程,构建全国英语专业英语自主学习体系,使优秀教学资源共享,充分体现“以人为本”的教学理念。这一举措也反映了由于当前英语专业招生人数的不断扩大,英语专业的传统教学模式已不能满足当前专业教学的需要。本系列教材采用立体化配套,将各种多媒体手段运用到教学中来,这是英语专业教学发展的需要,也将为我国英语专业教学改革和发展作出重大贡献。

4. 可教性。在编写过程中,反复强调教材的可教性。在选材上,讲究趣味性,让学生喜欢学。在内容安排上,力争让学生在较少的课时内学到该学的内容,从而体现当代先进的模块化教学思想。在习题设计上,做到有针对性、形式丰富,便于教师和学生课内课外操作。充分体现教学过程以学生为中心的教學理念,通过教师与学生互动、学生之间互动的教学活动,把语言、文学、文化、翻译等方面的教学内容转化成为学生能掌握的技能和知识,着力培养学生分析问题和解决问题的能力,传授基本研究方法,增强学生的研究意识和问题意识,同时提高学生的学术素养,提升学生的综合素质。

5. 适用性。本系列教材集中全国著名大学的一批专家编写,凝聚了他们多年教学经验的精华,体现了我国英语专业教学的最新理念和先进水平。入选系列教材的初稿均在不同重点高校教学中使用过至少三轮以上,深受学生喜爱,能够真正反映当前英语专业教学改革的思路和教学的实际情况。

综上,本系列教材反映了当代新的教学理念。为此,编委会也做出了巨大努力。一方面,编写工作中强调协同性。在编写策划层面,出版社与编委会之间、编委会与编写者之间反复协商,制订计划,讨论样章;在使用者层面,充分考虑到师生之间以及学生之间的互动和协作。另一方面,教材致力于构建良好的英语学习平台,为学生的自主性学习、独立思考和创新思维创造条件,同时向作为教学各个环节的咨询者、组织者、监督者的教师提供指导。

多年以来英语专业教材，特别是专业高年级教材的出版比较零散，一直没有相对配套完整的系列教材。我们深信本系列教材的出版对于推动英语专业的教学改革和建设，对于进一步提高英语专业人才的培养质量将起到积极的作用。同时，我们衷心希望听取广大师生的意见和建议，使本系列教材的出版日臻完善。

“高等院校英语专业立体化系列教材”编委会

2007年10月

Preface

This book is designed as an introductory course in second language acquisition (SLA) that provides Chinese students with some necessary knowledge and information about second language (L2) acquisition and learning.

The book aims to:

1. introduce SLA as an independent field of study,
2. review the linguistic and pedagogic bases of SLA,
3. define the key concepts of SLA,
4. critically examine existing theories of SLA,
5. help understand individual learner differences,
6. analyze learner language, and
7. discuss SLA research methods.

Unit 1 introduces the definition, importance, areas, and history of second language acquisition. Unit 2 reviews the linguistic and pedagogic bases of second language acquisition by reviewing the definition of language, different views about language, the nature of learning, misconceptions about learning, and the mystery of first language (L1) acquisition. Unit 3 defines the key SLA concepts of competence and performance; distinctions between first language, second language, and foreign language; acquisition and learning; input and output; interlanguage; second language variability, fossilization and language transfer. Unit 4 addresses the fundamental theories of SLA such as universal grammar (UG), interlanguage theory, the monitor theory, connectionism, construction grammar (CG), the acculturation model, and sociocultural theory. Unit 5 identifies the individual learner variables of learning strategies, learning styles, aptitude, intelligence, motivation, personality, age, and the role of first language in SLA. Unit 6 discusses useful methods for analyzing learner language that consist of contrastive analysis (CA), error analysis (EA), and contrastive interlanguage analysis (CIA). It defines the basic concepts of CA, EA and CIA, and describes the basic theoretical assumptions, procedures, and limitations of these methods. Unit 7 addresses the importance of quantitative and qualitative research methods in SLA such as the use of survey, observation, case study, and interview, as well as the procedures for conducting SLA studies.

This book, based on the author's years of teaching an SLA introductory course to MA and PhD

students at a number of universities in China, is the result of the project on “the National Plan for University Textbooks in the Eleventh Five-Year Plan”. The author has specially designed this textbook for English major undergraduates and other students or readers who have an interest in the theories and methods of second language acquisition.

The author is grateful to all the colleagues, editors, and students who have helped in many ways in the writing of this book. He would like to thank Prof. Hu Zhuanglin, Prof. Wen Qiufang, Prof. Wang Shouren, and Prof. Chen Jianping, who offered valuable suggestions about content design. He is also grateful to Prof. Li Xiaohua, his former PhD student, for writing the relevant paragraphs about construction grammar, and Prof. Yuan Fengshi, his current PhD student, for useful resources about language transfer.

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Unit

1

Introducing Second Language Acquisition

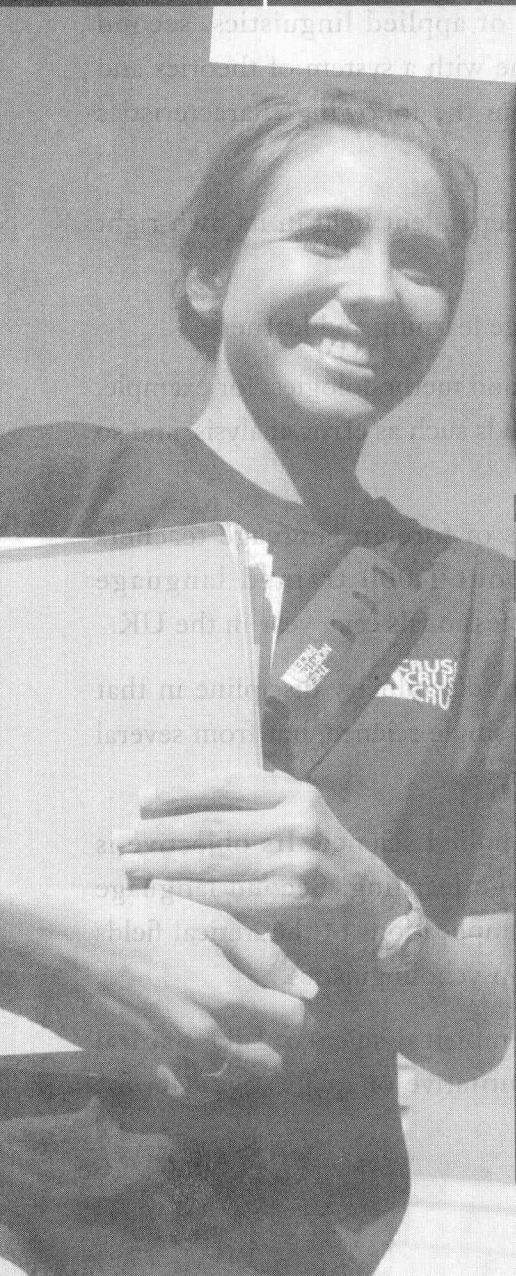
Unit Preview

This unit focuses on the following topics:

- definition of second language acquisition
- aims of second language acquisition
- areas of second language acquisition
- history of second language acquisition

Pre-learning Tasks

1. When did you begin to learn a foreign language? Do you feel it difficult or easy to learn a foreign language as a child or as an adult? Why?
2. Why are you motivated to learn a foreign language?
 - A. To learn it for fun
 - B. To meet school requirements
 - C. To improve personal quality and ability
 - D. To go abroad
3. Combine a web search with your own examples of learning in a powerpoint presentation to show your experience and understanding of how to learn a foreign language well.



1.1

What Is Second Language Acquisition?

Second language acquisition, is the processes by which people learn languages in addition to their native tongue(s) (Johnson & Johnson, 1998). Just as second language is the standard term for any language whose acquisition starts after early childhood, it also includes what is chronologically the third or subsequent language.

As one of the most important branches of applied linguistics, second language acquisition is a scientific discipline with a system of theories and practice. Its nature can be understood from the following characteristics (wang, 2000: 4).

- 1) **Second language acquisition** is an independent field in its own right because it has
 - (1) its own object of study, i.e. , language learning and learners;
 - (2) its own scientific system of theories and methodologies; for example, interlanguage theory, research methods such as error analysis, and so on;
 - (3) its own researchers, i.e. , millions of foreign language teachers around the world today, and about 1,000 trained language researchers or applied linguistics professionals each year in the UK.
- 2) **Second language acquisition** is an interdisciplinary discipline in that it not only draws upon theories from a single science, but from several sciences such as sociology and psychology.
- 3) **Second language acquisition** is an applied science. Its objective is to solve practical problems in language learning. Second language acquisition is also concerned with the implications of theoretical fields such as linguistics, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.
- 4) **Second language acquisition** is an empirical science. Like natural sciences, it uses experiments and quantitative or qualitative data for language research.

1.2 Why Is Second Language Acquisition Important?

When we learn a second/foreign language, it is very important and necessary to understand the learner and learning. There are at least two reasons to investigate second language acquisition.

1) To Understand the Second Language Acquisition Phenomena

It is the intention of investigators in the field of second language acquisition to unravel the mysteries of language acquisition. Second language acquisition investigators base their investigations on previous theoretical and experimental studies. These studies may have been carried out within their own field (SLA) as well as outside second language acquisition, in various branches of psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, linguistics, and pedagogy.

2) To Apply Second Language Acquisition Research in Second Language Learning & Teaching

As indicated above, the goal of second language acquisition is to understand how learners learn, i.e., the processes underlying non-native language acquisition. Second language teaching based on an understanding of the second language learner and learning would be much more efficient and effective. Second language acquisition researchers and teachers whose particular interest is in facilitating the language learning process should find ways of interpreting relevant second language acquisition phenomena in ways that will benefit the language learner. Second language acquisition research can be applied in the following areas (Cook, 2001):

- language teaching
- language examinations and tests
- syllabi and curricula
- course materials

1.3 Which Areas Does Second Language Acquisition Study?

According to Ellis (1994), second language acquisition studies four specified areas: a) interlanguage, or learner language; b) learner external factors; c) learner internal factors; and d) individual learner differences. The first area inter-correlates and interacts with the other three areas.

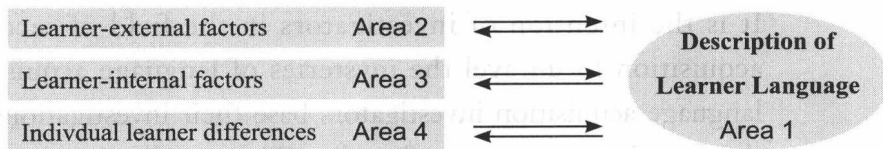


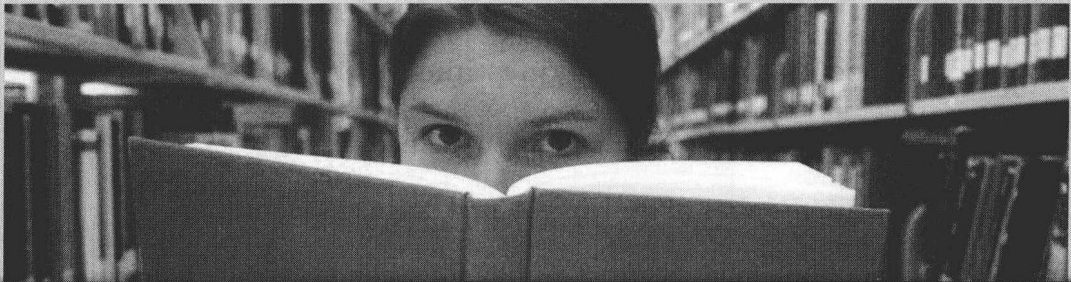
Fig. 1.1 Areas of Second Language Acquisition Research (Ellis, 1994)

- 1) **Learner language** refers to second language learners' linguistic and pragmatic performance and products.
- 2) **Learner external factors** include such external variables as social environment, family background, school facilities, teaching conditions, teaching methods, and so on.
- 3) **Learner internal factors** consist of such inner variables as aptitude, intelligence, learning styles, learning strategies, and so on.
- 4) **Individual learner differences** refer to second language learners' age, gender, personality, motivation, native language proficiency level, second language level, and so on.

1.4 How Long Is the History of Second Language Acquisition?

Second language acquisition is a relatively new, interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Brown, 1994). While several important studies appeared much earlier, most empirical research has been conducted since 1960 by researchers drawing heavily upon theory, research findings, and research methods from a variety of fields, including education, psychology, linguistics, anthropology, foreign languages, ESL, and applied linguistics. Data-based second language acquisition research is presented at a variety of conferences, most of which focus on reporting second language acquisition research results, and is

published in a wide range of journals. Important results often go unnoticed because they remain buried in unpublished theses. There is very little funding available, and almost none at all in the USA, where many second language acquisition researchers work. Second language acquisition's brief history means that few issues have yet been investigated exhaustively. Controversy over whether language development is the effect of an inborn language faculty or of a more general cognitive ability of humans to acquire knowledge about the environment they live in will continue into the future (Johnson & Johnson, 1998).



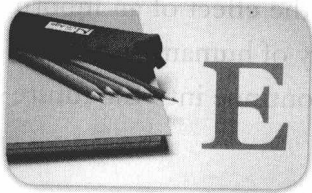
Unit Wrap-up

- **Second language acquisition:** (or SLA), is the processes by which people learn languages in addition to their native tongue(s).
- **Aims of second language acquisition research:** to help understand the learner and learning.
- **Areas of second language acquisition research:** include interlanguage, external and internal learner factors, and individual differences.
- **History of second language acquisition:** second language acquisition is a very new branch of applied linguistics and enjoys a rather short history, but has

Further Readings

- 1 Ellis, R. (1994). *The Study of Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- 2 Gass, S. & Selinker, L. (2001). *Second Language Acquisition: An Introductory Course*. New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.



xercises

Task I Discuss the following questions.

1. How is second language acquisition defined?
2. What are the aims of studying second language acquisition?
3. What are the focused areas of study for second language acquisition?
4. Describe briefly the historical development of second language acquisition.

Task II Determine whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- () 1. Adults learn second languages more quickly and easily than young children.
- () 2. A lot of immigrant children have learning disabilities, not language problems. They speak English just fine, but they are still failing academically.
- () 3. Older generations of immigrants learned without all the special language programs that immigrant children receive now. It was "sink or swim", and they did just fine!
- () 4. Second language learners will acquire academic English faster if